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E S S A Y S

AND

L E T T E R S

ON THE

Most important and interesting

S U B J E C T S.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N:

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MDCCLXXXIII.

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P R E F A C E.

CUSTOM has so established it as a kind of tax on all Writers, to prefix a preliminary discourse to every sort of publication, that an omission of one would be looked upon as a refusal of an expected tribute.

How difficult soever, then, I find it, in the present case, to write an introduction to the following sheets, I will not omit it, lest the vanity of particularity, and not the difficulty of the task, should be charged upon me.

I could follow the beaten track, and assure my Readers, that the desire of my Friends had at length prevailed with me to send my thoughts into the world; or, that a few incorrect copies having got about, I

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was, though with great reluctance, obliged to send them myself to the Press. These, or some such reasons as these, I might urge, induced me to appear in print ; and, perhaps, such excuses might be better received than the *truth*. But as I prefer *that* (even in a Preface) to fiction, I shall not deviate from it.

The truth, then, is simply this :—Having, for a great number of years, accustomed myself to commit my thoughts to paper, on every subject that occurred to me, and to write them down on scraps of paper, without order ; or, if some are more methodical, yet they were mingled with other thoughts, and, by a course of time, were got into a very confused state ; therefore, having a little leisure, I resolved to arrange my scattered fragments, and to print them in some kind of regularity, for my own use and comfort. This is the exact state of the case : my Preface, then, ought to have been addressed to myself, as it is for myself I send these collections of thoughts to the Press. If any one
reads

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reads them besides the Author, I trust them to their candour ; if not, I shall have reaped the advantage I intended, that of knowing where to refer to any subject on which I have employed my thoughts.

Perhaps it may be said, I had no business to think at all. Perhaps so ; but Thinking is a liberty we have all a right to be indulged in ; and, unless in matters which can disturb the peace of society, I hope we may be at liberty even to *think aloud*.

These Papers, indeed, were the secret whispers of my own heart. I trust they are harmless, and that, if read, they will be found to contain nothing that can give the slightest offence to the three great articles of our happiness, Reason, Religion, and Virtue.

THE AUTHOR.

ESSAY INTRODUCTORY.

BEFORE I send from my closet those Thoughts and Opinions which have been the subjects of my leisure hours there, I think it necessary to apprise those who may take the trouble to read them, that they will find nothing new; as I conceive, that all that can be said on History, Morality, Religion, Physics, and Metaphysics, has been said by the learned and unlearned long ago. I fear, as this is acknowledged, I shall find it needful to make an apology for writing at all. This task, indeed, is a hard one; suffice it to say, that, while pens, ink, and paper, remain in the world, there will be scribblers, as well as wise men, who will make use of them. Those who have felt the pleasure of committing their thoughts to paper, will, I am persuaded, pardon me. Those who have not, can have no idea of the sensation: I must therefore crave their candour to believe the truth of what I set forth in my Preface; and add to it, that scribbling is nearly the only thing in which I find

amusement ; and this, I trust, will draw their forgiveness. I assure all who may look on these pages, that, though I enter the world veiled, I tremble every step I take. I rely on this, that Truth has ever guided my pen ; I can at least affirm, Sincerity has.—

Whatever wants an apology in these Essays, must arise from want of knowledge, or want of manner. That they will be very deficient in both, I readily believe ; but I think I do not deceive myself, when I say, I never meant to deceive others. I shall meet, perhaps, with few friends ; but those few must be sincere, because unknown. I shall meet, no doubt, with many enemies, who will condemn without mercy. The former must console me for the latter ; though I will endeavour, while I feel their wrath, to profit by their censure.

Praise and blame are equally profitable to a mind disposed not to be elated, but spurred on to good actions, by praise ; and not depressed, but disposed to amend, by blame. Where praise is just, it with good reason delights ; where it is unjust, it ought to be made not so for the future. Where censure is just, it ought to correct, not anger us ; and where it is unjust, it should pass unheeded by us.

E S S A Y II.

IT has been much doubted, and perhaps will ever remain so, whether the thinking part of mankind receive most pleasure or pain from their speculations. The fine faculties of the mind, when exerted in contemplation, certainly add quickness to the feelings occasioned by every incident which meets us in life. I have, however, after a long and minute observation on the passions and tempers of mankind, found reason to think, that there is as great a variety in the speculative part of the world, and consequently in their feelings, as in the more common run of mankind. The man with strong passions, who contemplates, generally turns his thoughts to injuries, hardships, and sorrows; sees the cloud, and pronounces a storm: if it bursts, he feels all the pangs of sorrow, and adds to every feeling by thinking of every aggravation to the distress. His lofty mind condescends not to make trifles contribute to his happiness, though he too often makes them do so to his misery. In every common incivility he sees an affront; in every small, accidental slight, an

injury. Quick-sighted, sensible of his own consequence, he resents the least wound to his pride. He contemplates mankind, but it is to compare them with himself; he sees the sorrows of others, but it is to find that his own exceed. High sense, when it meets with high passions, is detrimental to the peace of the possessor, and to that of those about him. He proclaims his opinions, and is astonished if his arguments fail of success. His joys are few, and his sorrows many; for his microscope enlarges every thing odious, and diminishes every thing beautiful.—Another sort of Speculators skim the surface of nature: they fly just above the common standard of understanding, and, surveying the whole creation, see a confused heap of things, which they are too volatile to separate; whereupon they decide, that all is vanity, all is alike; and therefore resolve to have no vexation of spirit. They feel happiness from the notion, that nothing is of consequence in a world where all meet with good and with bad more or less; therefore, Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. This is their motto. They feel little from afflictions, and not much from blessings; for their insensibility to both which, they think themselves the wisest of mankind. These airy beings do mankind neither good nor harm: the wise pity them, the ignorant envy them; they themselves
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reap the pleasure of self-satisfaction, but not much else.—There is another sort of phlegmatic Philosopher, whose gloomy soul sees a dark and dismal world; frights himself out of it with the view; and then, not having an opportunity to contradict his ideas by mixing with it, strengthens his opinion by every thing he hears; wraps himself up in his own web, which grows tougher and tougher every hour. At length he becomes callous to feeling, by feeling too much; and, if private misfortune reaches him, he only views it as one of the dismal things to which this dismal world is subjected, and therefore is not particularly affected by it. He lives an uncomfortable, unsociable, uncharitable life, and dies unregretted. — Another sort of Thinkers there are, who turn their philosophy to their own great advantage, but are not particularly useful to mankind in general; though, it must be allowed, they are so to those individuals with whom they are connected, or who live within their reach. These view the world with an equal and composed eye; take in the manners of mankind, the events of life, and the beauties of creation, in one comprehensive view; consider and speculate on things great and small, and, by doing so, make the least yield them pleasure, and the greatest neither exhilarate nor depress them too much. These receive pleasure from the
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blowing of a rose, or the sight of an insect. Their amusements, indeed, are few, to outward appearance; but they are seated in the mind, and are therefore innumerable. To a speculative mind, the smallest, as well as the greatest incident, is curious: it sees a character in every passing acquaintance, and pays itself for the loss of time in a visit of ceremony, by inward contemplation; which, as it is not balanced towards either the gloomy or the lively, brings variety sufficient not to disgust, but entertain. Such as these deeply indeed feel the strokes of affliction, but still they meet them with calmness; do not suppose themselves the only, or the worst of sufferers, nor that they are not to suffer because their case is common. The enlarged manner in which they view every object, induces them to think every, the smallest thing, of importance, which can conduce to the comfort or pleasure of mankind; and that comfort and pleasure are so necessary to the passing life agreeably to themselves and others, that they do not let small things disturb their peace: they look on trifles as trifles, when they arise to sour their mind, but as of importance, when they arise to make it chearful. Tranquillity is their great *ne plus ultra*, for which they make their minds expand to grasp at every passing trifle that can bring a moment's pleasure, but close at the touch
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of every trifle that can ruffle. By this way of thinking, they receive and give pleasure from the minutest article; and philanthropy is the result of their philosophy. They are glad to conduce, in the merest trifle, to the satisfaction of another. Their comfort is of importance in their sight; and as they are sensible, that those things are of consequence to the happiness of others, which to them are trifles, they willingly forego their own smaller satisfaction, to procure a greater to another. For example—Will my going to such a place prevent another—I will not go, say they; for though I shall receive amusement by going, yet their disappointment at not going will be greater than mine would be; therefore I will not go—but I won't even let them see it is they prevent me, lest it take off a moment's satisfaction in the going. The satisfaction of their own mind repays them, and every pleasure to another is one to them. Passions of every kind sink into mere passing shadows, in the soul where past, present, and future, stand continually in view; where the consequence of each action is seen at the time of impulse; and where calm Reason is allowed, by a habit of speculation, to exert all her force. Anger is subdued by fearing to irritate another; and, in short, every arising passion is quieted and turned, by a composure which a long course of deep and enlarged

larged sentiments have brought to the soul. They read not only mankind, but themselves, with a clear and unprejudiced eye; and are surprised to find self-knowledge represented as a hard, when it is to them an easy, attainment. To others candid, to themselves severe, is verified in these composed philosophers; not by condemning themselves in the gross, and praising others by the lump; but by allowing those defects in others to admit of excuse, which in themselves they condemn, because they see how little others have to draw them off from them, but what advantages themselves have enjoyed to shew them their errors. Worthy actions they see, and see with pleasure, in themselves and in others; but in others they generally seem more meritorious, because the inducements have been few, perhaps, in comparison, to lead them to perform them. They receive praise with a wish ever to deserve it; and heave a gentle sigh to Heaven, for this approbation of God, as well as Man. They receive contumely with equality of mind: if false, they rejoice that it is so; if true, they blame themselves, not the reporter.—But enough of these Philosophers: let us leave them to enjoy their own delightful tranquillity, and, if we envy, imitate them.

The speculations of the persons last described,
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tend, indeed, to make themselves and their own circle happy; but they do not stretch to that extensive benefit, which results from the labours of those who spend their lives in studying and investigating some particular science, or in seeking for the cause in the effect of some of the wonders of nature. These, it must be allowed, are the *Thinkers* who are of most benefit to mankind. They may justly be called *Free-thinkers* (more deserving of that name than those who confine all nature within their own narrow bounds). These Philosophers search for the great secrets of nature, not to doubt, but to prove a Providence; for the deeper they go, the higher will be their wonder, and the surer their belief. They explore nature for the benefit of mankind, and their own pleasure. Works of art, too, deserve due praise; and every fresh improvement takes its rise from the man of study. To rest satisfied with nature and art as we find it, is, happily for us, the general turn of mankind; but it is also happy, that some men of genius strike out, in every age, something new, useful, and beautiful. The arts, of some particular sorts, never, perhaps, were so high as at present; and though we cannot compliment a manufactory with putting it quite upon a level with a philosophical enquiry into nature, it deserves at least high praise, for the indefatigable labour

bour which brought it to its perfection; and, indeed, the head cannot be shallow, which sets the hand so craftily to work. Long and unwearied pains must go to the bringing any, the most trivial art, to perfection; and every labour of an individual, which contributes to the ease, delight, or knowledge of the whole, claims our gratitude and our praise. Even the perfection of a pin was not attained without long labour and many disappointments on the part of the inventor; and I cannot help reverencing every such person, and regarding him as a Philosopher; though he that could lay open the system of the heavens, claims, with most, the title to himself. Whoever has patience to explore, and resolution to fix his mind to, one object or subject, for the benefit of others, deserves, in my opinion, the name of a Philosopher, both from his patience and benevolence.

In former ages, we read of the laughing and the crying, or the grave and the gay Philosophers—I mean they were *professionally* so. In our days, as I have observed, the eye of Speculation will either dwell on the gloomy or the sportive view of mankind; but those who set up for *patterns* of wisdom, on each side, are vanished. The light of revelation dispelled those mists of error, even though the professors of them did not become Christians: but it taught all mankind to think,
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that things of importance were few, and those few were serious; that things of small value were numerous, and therefore not worth regarding. The mind of man, ever busy, and ever inquisitive, when satisfied with regard to the essentials of his existence, began to exert itself in exploring nature, in inventing arts, and in displaying its discoveries to the world. We see, then, that to condemn all philosophy or speculation, would be as absurd as to suppose a whole nation was crooked, from having seen but one of its inhabitants so. I have described four sorts: the first, those whose reflections tend to their own disquiet, and that of other people's.—The second, the superficial Philosophers, whose airy manner of taking every thing for nothing makes their own hearts light, but whose opinions are not productive of any real happiness.—The third *Thinker* is the gloomy speculatist, who draws a black veil over his eyes, and sees all events and actions, men and manners, in a gloomy medium: these men hurt themselves, but are not much regarded by the world.—The fourth Philosopher I named, is he who views the world as in camera: men, manners, events, effects, and causes, pass before him in their own colours, neither blackened by gloom, nor brightened by levity. His speculations tend to compose his own mind, and to make him a harmless,

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if not a useful, member of society : where he can give pleasure, he gives ; and where he can receive it, he receives it.—The last Philosopher is the man who merits most of his fellow-creatures : his labours are for their good ; and though perhaps it may be said that he rides his own hobby-horse, yet he rides him ultimately for the benefit of others : his cogitations are for the benefit of society, or at least for their amusement : perhaps he spends his wealth, health, and life, in the discovery of some useful piece of knowledge, that may give ease, comfort, or conveniency, to thousands of his fellow-creatures, or tend to give unspeakable delight to those who can follow him in his discoveries, who do not particularly benefit by them.

I hope I have fully proved, it is impossible to decide as an arbitrary question, whether Philosophers or Speculative persons (call them which you please) are most beneficial or detrimental to society, since so many different sorts are to be found.

While men are men, there must be found among them those who think ; and though there are some exceptions, yet, for the most part, I am apt to believe, pleasure and profit attend on contemplation and philosophy.

ESSAY

E S S A Y III.

THE knowledge of ourselves, with all due deference to ancient writers, is a matter, the difficulty of which lies not in the thing itself, but in the attaining that sincerity that is necessary towards its perfection. If a person in reality wishes to know himself, and is desirous to find out his real disposition, let him but be true to himself, in examining what are his motives of action, the principal turn of his thoughts, and the general run of his discourse, and he will not be long ignorant of the secret bias of his heart. Let a person take the same sort of view of himself, that he would do, if, for any material reason, he wished to dive into another's character, and his heart will open to him immediately : he will see himself as in a glass ; and that not an obscure and dark one, but such a one as will reflect even his defects in true and genuine colours,---will magnify rather than diminish them ; and from this reason, because he is true to himself, and in earnest in his enquiry, wishing to open a way to reformation of error, and

every tendency to what is inconsistent with sound sense and goodness.

Another reason why we are deficient in this knowledge, or negligent in the search of it, is this, because we do not intend to make use of it, if we attain it: we like ourselves very well as we are: we fancy that even our failings are less than those of other people, and our little arts towards others of use to us in the intercourse with the world: we therefore don't care to search to the true cause of these failings, for, if we do, we shall think ourselves, in some measure, bound to correct them; and our slight insincerities towards others we had rather continue, without probing to the source of them, as we might probably find they proceeded from so dark a corner, that it must be thoroughly cleansed, before we could bear again to hold sweet converse with ourselves. Thus, I am persuaded, the difficulty of self-knowledge arises from the consequences that would follow a sincere search, and the difficulty of procuring that necessary resolution to be in earnest with ourselves in the doing it. But how short-sighted are we, in neglecting what would be of the greatest benefit to us, and, after a very short time, would turn to the highest pleasure! How very respectable is that character, which takes its rise at the great fountain of action, and begins in the
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approbation of the heart ! Such a character can never be shaken : the ground-work is laid too deep, and the superstructure is all too uniform to totter by the united force of danger and temptation. A righteous man is satisfied from himself : he can turn inward, and there find consolation, in the certainty that his intentions were such, as, if known, would acquit him to the world, as well as to himself and to his God.

Know thyself, was a wise precept, but generally ranked among the number of those easier laid down than followed. True it is, that it seldom is so ; but, as I have said, the task is not attended with difficulty from the inscrutableness of our natures, but the insincerity of our hearts in the work. We cannot be hid from ourselves. So far are we from being a mystery, that nothing is more plain to our understandings than the reasons of our actions. The only bar in our search is the consciousness that we ought to make good use of it, and, having dealt fairly in it, to cast off whatever is disgraceful to our nature, and adopt whatever would be an honour to it, whatever would render our next enquiry into ourselves agreeable and delightful. Whoever, therefore, with sincerity looks into himself, in order to become acquainted with his motives of action (for that is true self-knowledge), and in order to disco-

ver his failings, and to correct them, will easily attain to such a certainty, with regard to himself, and to such a command over himself, as will amply reward his search, and give him consistency of action and regularity of conduct.

ESSAY IV.

AMONG all the infirmities of our nature, there is none more detrimental to ourselves, and prejudicial to others, than taking a sort of delight in a tale that speaks ill of another : a story told to the prejudice of the reputation, behaviour, good nature, or good sense, of another, be they ever so little known to the persons to whom the tale is told, is sure to meet with greedy hearers, and who are as ready to tell it again as they were to hear it at first. Whether mankind in general think they are exalted by another's debasement, or what other motive they may have to hear and tell a tale to the disadvantage of their fellow-creature, with so much avidity, I will not now determine ;

determine; but I will venture to affirm, that it reflects neither honour nor importance upon them. A friend of mine, who is very remarkable for his steadiness of temper, whenever he hears a story of this sort told with eagerness, always dryly remarks, "Now I have heard one side." This seldom fails to discompose the tale-tellers, and they scarce know whether they ought not to take it up as an affront to their veracity; but after some little time they consider, that, as they had it second-hand, the person that told them is the injured person; and they reply, with some warmth, "Nay, Sir, please to ask Mr. Such-a-one if it is not true." "No (says my friend) that I certainly shall not; as that would be to make sure of having the same story told again."

These reflections occurred to me from a very remarkable instance of this infirmity, as I have gently called it, of catching with pleasure at an ill report, and of spreading one.

I was in company some time ago, where a story was told, much to the prejudice of a gentleman who has been married a little more than a year, and is now parted from his wife, by his own desire. The cruelty of this was enlarged, and every aggravating circumstance dwelt upon; and, among other matters, it was said, that he was very old, and she very young; and that, to add to all the rest,

he had prejudiced her relations against her. All the company sat in judgment on this gentleman, condemned him without judge or jury, and settled it that she was happy to have been parted from such a brute. There was a good many in company, and as each heard this story with great attention, so most of them intended to repeat it to the next they went into: it was a delicious morsel for the tellers and the next hearers. One of the company, happening to fall next in the way of a family somewhat connected with the supposed injured lady, asked them some questions concerning this affair, and expressed some concern for the share they must have taken in her distress: but how surprised must the person have been to hear, that the whole matter arose from herself, and that every kindness had been shewn her by her husband; that the desire to part had come from herself; that her strange aversion to him had hurt him extremely; and that he was, in all respects, a man of an upright and amiable disposition: that he had tried every means to make her happy; and though she had been very extravagant, he had assured her, he should not have regarded that, if he could have had her affection; but all would not do. Her father was so incensed against her, from the thorough conviction of her bad temper and his goodness, that he had forbid her coming to

to his house when she left her husband's; but he had wrote so earnestly, to intreat him to let nothing between them induce him to behave harshly to her, that the father at last consented to see her. I own, I had a pleasure, when I met the same company again, which I did very soon, in contradicting all their ill reports; and I cannot but lament the propensity to swallow greedily a story to the discredit of another. If it is true, it ought to be related with caution, and heard with pain. Were this the case, we should soon have fewer stories circulated from house to house; and the advantages of this to society in general are too obvious to need being pointed out.

E S S A Y V.

THERE are beauties in some kind of writings, which strike us almost every time they are read, and are so consonant to the mind of man, that they seem, as it were, but the idea of all minds expressed in words by one. These kind of beautiful truths no where appear so often as in the Scripture. The poetical and concise style in which they are wrote, suit those few strong and fixed principles and positions which are in the breast and understanding of all mankind. To instance, in two or three—When Saul had disobeyed the strict injunction of God to slay every beast of the Amalekite, he endeavours to excuse his disobedience, by saying it was in order to offer those beasts he had saved to God himself in Gilgal. Samuel first appeals to his own decision, whether he thinks God would admit this as an excuse; then adds, in one of those concise and convicting sentences I have been alluding to, “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams!” Does not the understanding and the heart, reason
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and conscience, bow assent to this doctrine? We feel its truth in our inward soul, and confess, that to obey is better than to sacrifice; and to hearken, than to offer the fat of rams. Obedience must be more acceptable to our Creator, than any conceits of our own; and to listen to his commands, more becoming a creature, than the richest offers, if not required of us. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry: it leads us into a thousand unnecessary and unacceptable acts, and makes us set up our own ideas of religion, and pass over judgment and the love of God, which he has commanded, and will alone accept. The will of God once known, we have nothing to do but to obey; and all the happiness we can possibly enjoy follows, both here and hereafter. Another of the beautiful and pointed expressions is when Balak wishes to know what to do to obtain God's favour and forgiveness. He would even sacrifice his son, if need be, to obtain them. "Shall I (exclaims the Prophet) dost thou say, shall I give the *fruit* of my *body* for the *sin* of my *soul*!" The very manner of expressing the question of Balak carries its contradiction with it. Can the son, the innocent son of thy body, atone for the presumption which has stained thy soul? No; on more rational terms thy pardon will be sealed, and thy
offence

offence cancelled; even by obedience to that Lord which you *already* know. "He *bath* shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what does he require of thee, but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God!"—So plain, so express, so consonant to right reason, are all the commands of God! Sure we may exclaim, in the words of our Saviour himself, His yoke is easy, and his burden light. All that God prohibits, are those things which are occasioned by the fall of our nature; and all that he commands, are productive of bringing it again to its original perfection, and are agreeable to its primitive state. Some uninspired writers have had this happy manner of expressing themselves: Shakespeare has many such sentences; Doctor Young is particular for his pointed expressions, both in prose and verse; and the mind is pleased, and the heart bettered, at the same time.

Morality, says our excellent Spectator, without Religion, is a dull, insipid, lifeless service. How true is this observation! and we may add, that Morality without Religion is unsupported by one of its safest props; for I believe every principle insecure, that has not that for its support. I will allow, that even Morality, as it is virtue, appears, and is, amiable and useful; but, in time of temptation, it may fall away: it will stand, perhaps, a little

little while; but touch a darling passion, try to shake a tender string, bring a temptation which a man is naturally inclined to comply with, and all the airy fabric totters to its centre. Its foundation is in the sand, and the storms will shake it, and, by their continuance, overthrow it. The great and wise answer of excellent Joseph stands on record without effect, but from the beautiful light which Religion casts upon it. Why not commit the crime to which we are tempted, if we do not know that it is displeasing to God, or that he will punish us for it? And if Moralists say, they do not dispute that point, but act as if to give account; I pray, how do they know that they are to give that account, but from Revelation.—We often meet with, in writings not particularly celebrated, truths which give us pleasure, as they strike in unison with the finer feelings of the soul. Why is a picture of virtue struggling with distress pleasing to the reader, but because it places nature in that point of view which seems most to recommend it? Sentences from the pulpit sometimes strike us in this manner, and we feel a glow of virtuous ambition, a kind of momentary goodness, which is both delightful and useful. Of this sort was a sentiment I heard lately, from a graceful divine: he was recommending it to us not to be distressed at the mixture

mixture of good people and bad in this world. The bad, says he, without the good, would lose one of their strongest incitements to virtue; and let not then the good repine at being thus instrumental to the happiness of their fellow-creatures. The bad are to the good trials of their own virtue, and one of God's merciful methods to reclaim the vicious. The good man's life, said he, is the best comment on the truths of religion; and they never can come with stronger force than from the mouth of the holy. Their reproofs must be borne with, since they remonstrate only against such things as they have denied themselves before; and I may add, they commend no virtue which themselves have not felt the sweets of. And all must acknowledge, when they hear a sentence of truth uttered from a person whose life has proved it, that we feel it very forcibly: it is like a beautiful painting put in a right light by the hand that drew it.

E S S A Y VI.

TO be moderate, is by most allowed to be right, but by few relished, and by fewer practised. Some are even rash enough to assert, that to be moderate in some instances, is wrong, and by many it is thought that moderation is insipidity. But (if the impetuous can consider) a little consideration would open to them new ideas, and a juster estimate of the virtue of moderation. When duly weighed, it will be found to consist in the refinement of every virtue; to be the ensurer of success in every undertaking; to be the securer of our happiness, the extricator of our difficulties, the permanence of our possessions: it will be found to be the great perfecter of our souls, and, indeed, to be perfection itself; for an able writer has observed, whatever rises above, or sinks beneath, one due medium, is imperfect. In our greatest concern, Religion, if our zeal rises too high, it is enthusiastic and presumptuous; if we are careless and cold, we are unworthy of the honour of being Christians. In temporal concerns, he that is halcy and hazardous, loses more than he gains;

gains ; and if he is slothful and neglectful, he rather goes back than forward : but he who with steady industry pursues his employment, whatever it may be, seldom meets with disappointment, but reaps both praise and profit.

As moderation is a wise qualification in business, it is so also in our conduct towards one another. Heat, positiveness, rashness, are liable to give us much uneasiness, and bring with them a thousand troubles. On the other hand, unsteadiness, irresolution, pusillanimity, render us uncomfortable to ourselves, and all about us ; and both the one and the other prevent our gaining many advantages, which a steady, cool, unprejudiced conduct, would bring us, and which would also procure us the respect and regard of friends, and even of foes. Moderation in thought, word, and action, make a man master of himself and of the world : it gains him many friends, and throws the blame on his enemies, if any such he has : it enables him to pursue every attempt with much hope of success ; and, if he fails, it leaves him no room to blame himself. Moderation in pleasures gives the truest relish in them, and leaves delight in the recollection of them. In brief, in whatever light we view this principle, we shall find it essential to our good ; it is an active, not a lifeless principle, but pervades

vades the whole soul of the wise man, at the same time that it makes him forgive the want of it in others. All joys to him are durable ones, because he never possesses them with that gloomy maxim, Let me eat and drink, for to-morrow I die; but with that chearful one, Whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, I do all to the glory of God, the good of man, and the happiness of myself.

ESSAY VII.

WHILE Religion affords us the most exalted picture of Humanity during its state of activity, so it gives us the only pleasing one of it at the hour of death. Many great and distinguished characters have made their exit out of this world in a manner that points them out as brave, or collected, or affectionate. Such ends please us in the recapitulation; but none can afford complete satisfaction to the mind, but instances of greatness of behaviour in the double capacity of the man and the immortal. When the actions

actions of life are over, we fix our eye with attention on the departing shadow, to catch something, as it sinks away, that may cheer us in the view of ourselves, as it were, in that period; and support us when our light comes to be extinguished too. The dying hero, who exults at his conquest over the enemy of his country, we admire and revere; but it falls to the lot of few to imitate him. The monarch who dies recommending his people to the care of his successor, is an exalted and a pleasing character. The father who takes leave of his children with affection, and the wife who burns with her departed husband, are pictures of a beautiful appearance; but they may not lie in our power or our inclination to copy them. There is nothing in any of these suited to *all* mankind: they may please, but they do not affect the world in general; that which does so, must be something which all may both wish, and have it in their power to imitate. This attractive character is fully perfected in the dying Christian: all Nature cries out, with fervent rapture and desire, Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.

Religion unites, in one character, the Hero, the Philosopher, and the Saint. With greatness of soul, like the Hero, he rises superior to the darts of death, and bears its pains with fortitude, for the
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good it brings. With calmness, like the Philosopher, he sees the world recede, and takes a final leave of all around him. With the Saint, he looks forward with rapture to the world that now is opening to his view, and cries out, on a review of his past conduct, "Oh Death, where is thy sting!" and on the prospect of immortality and resurrection before him, he exults, "Oh Grave, where is thy victory!" Surely, such a one may be said to enjoy both worlds while he lives, and to feel no pang at parting with one of them, when he dies. Is it possible, then, for any thing to plead more powerfully for Religion, than the importance it claims from the resources it affords when every other thing fails us? It brings consolations which nothing but itself can bring, and which it alone offers to all. From every other merit we may derive a partial satisfaction, and some persons may have such as to others is denied: either they cannot attain it, or, if attained, it might not answer in bringing them consolation in distress, or pleasure in the possession. But Religion, with a liberal hand, pours its blessings on all alike: it is balm to the wounded spirit, it is cheerfulness to the prosperous, it is alacrity to the inquisitive, it is support to the disappointed, it is pleasure to the speculative, it is the flower of youth, and a crown of glory to age; and, after having led

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them all through every stage, with satisfaction to themselves, and honour from all that knew them, it lays them down in peace on the bed of death, calms their fears through that dangerous passage, and lands them safe on that shore, where it has already prepared myriads of holy beings to welcome their arrival, to sing songs of joy for their triumphs, and to mount with them, and conduct them up to those exalted regions of bliss, for which it has prepared and made them fit.

These are thy great deeds, O Religion, thou friend of man, by whom our nature is exalted and made happy ! Without Religion, our lives would be dull, and, if wicked, our deaths are agony. With Religion, the best life is the most cheerful, and death is never frightful.

E S S A Y VIII.

CONSCIENCE, that secret and sincere monitor within us, is, methinks, not so frequent, nor so persuasive, in her whispers, as she was accustomed to be. Whether Passion is so strong as to smother her attempts to speak, or whether it makes men so deaf, that they do not hear her voice, I cannot tell; but her checks seem to have little avail, and her sting to have lost its venom. She is, no doubt, struggling under these obstructions with all the strength she has; but faint and ineffectual are her efforts. What, said I, can be the cause of this? Are men weaker in their understandings, or are they more ignorant than formerly? No; neither of these appear to be the cause. Their capacities retain their strength, and knowledge every where abounds. But it is not in manhood, but in youth, that the precious seeds of Conscience receive a blight, and she brings no fruit to perfection. From early days, the mind is accustomed to hear of vice without a blush, and, when capable of joining in committing it, youth wants neither temptation, op-

portunity, or inclination, to do so. Youthful days are full of life, spirit, and vigour, and when employed in innocent or useful amusements and exercises, how pleasing do they appear! They train the future man to activity and industry, and fit him for a life either of bodily or mental usefulness. But, alas! by confounding ages together in one school, the boy learns the manners, the inclinations, the sports of the youth; and the youth pushes on to all the actions, the diversions, the behaviour of the man. Parents delight to see their son, so already, as it is styled, grown up, and, by way of improvement and encouragement (perhaps from vanity), send and bring him into the company of persons many years older than himself. Here lies the error; here is that root of all evil, which destroys the faithful monitor in the breast. Conscience in childhood is seldom so severe as in riper age, because the faults then committed proceed from want of knowledge, or from thoughtlessness, and but seldom from a real intention to do amiss: but if children are well grounded in the principles of right and wrong, Conscience, as they advance in age, will keep their mind awake, and watchful against temptation; and if they fall, it rebukes them with such a sensible feeling, that they grieve to have erred from the paths of right, and, though the offence were known only to themselves,

selves, would blush at the recollection. But if, just as this inward check would exert itself, the boy is hurried on to new scenes, and gay ones too, his heart and head are too much engrossed to listen to any thing within him. Happy, that he is supposed to be equal to the pleasures and sports above his years, he brooks not the reproofs of that rising thought, that he is on the verge of temptation, that he must be cautious where he treads, for that danger awaits him in every path but one. He stifles the monitor at once, and gives the rein to passion, and to the fame of being clever beyond his years. Conscience, thus thwarted in early youth, lies dormant; nor awakes from her lethargy, till the keen darts of some grievous affliction rouse her, or old-age and death force her to exert her now unavailing influence. She rushes on the mind of the dying with all her poisoned darts; reproaches him with stifling her friendly monitions in youth; lays before him all the train of ill it has occasioned; brings all his faults and follies before him; shews him how happy he might have been, if he had made her his friend; bids him look back with bitter tears of self-reproach, and forward with horror at the gulph into which he is going to be plunged.

All this evil might with facility be prevented, if, in early youth, the principles of right and

wrong were kept impressed upon the mind, and young persons were not hastened to the means of forgetting those principles, and to think them a burden instead of an honour.

It is to be lamented, in our schools both for boys and girls, that there is no distinction made for age. The child of eight apes the manners of the miss of fifteen; and the miss of fifteen, those of the established young woman.

Let children be children, in thought, word, and deed. Let them learn, but let them learn the business and employments of children: not hastening on their capacities, but filling them up with useful matters; employing their minds on things present, not on things to come. Herein lies the great art of educating children of both sexes. Fix their minds on their present business and amusements, give them enough of both to keep their minds and bodies active, and with riper years enlarge the scale of them, but keep the line still drawn round their own particular age. By this method, every faculty will grow up together with equal strength, and virtue take fast hold of their hearts; so that, when a larger scene of action becomes necessary, they may start at the odious form of vice, and Conscience fly to their assistance in temptation. This faithful friend will hold out to them reasons sufficient to resist seduction; or,
if

if once overcome, will give so deep a wound, that they will not again fall into the snare. She will, by this means, be restored to her lost dominion; and claim her ancient right of giving reproofs to the failings and faults of man, and joy unspeakable, joy without a name, to the upright in heart.

E S S A Y IX.

I WAS sitting the other evening on a bench in my garden, when I heard the sound of a step coming towards me. It was dusk, and I could not discern who it was; but a well-known voice, saying, "Where is he?" soon acquainted me it was a very welcome visitor. When I had discovered myself to him, he told me, he had come thus abruptly upon me, to ask my advice, in an affair of consequence to his own peace, and the happiness of his only daughter. I have, as you know, said my friend, only this one girl: my life is wrapped up in her; and I fear she has unalterably fixed her mind on a young gentleman

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who is by no means worthy of her. No matter for his fortune; 'tis his character I don't like. Now, my dear friend, said he, I am come to beg you would tell me the best method to turn her thoughts from this affair. In the first place, said I, my good friend, are you sure she has chose an unworthy object? How have you discovered him to be so? He told me all his reasons, which were, indeed, very sufficient ones. I asked him if he had told his daughter what he had heard. He said, No; he only told her in general he disliked the young man. So much the better, said I. Does she know you are come to me? No. So much the better: then leave the part of the character to me, and only adhere to your general answer that you dislike the match. One thing, said my friend, my wife and I have determined upon, and that is, to lay another young man in her way, whom we have long wished her to marry. Then, said I, my dear friend, I will have no hand in the affair; for I see you are resolved to drive her into the arms of Young Freeloze. Nay, how's that? what, because I provide a better man? Better or worse, said I, no matter, he is not Freeloze. Your daughter is too sensible to marry for the sake of marrying; she has unfortunately taken a good opinion of (and, if you will, a fancy for) this young fellow, and therefore at present will like no other. If you put
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any in her way, she will either run away from him with Freeloze, or, if too prudent for this, she will promise *herself*, and, what is worse, perhaps *him*, never to marry another. Indeed, my dear friend, there is not a more fatal, and, I fear I may say, a more common error, than that of thrusting one object down the throat of a young person already prepossessed in favour of another. It is not in human nature to relish one person, when partiality inclines to another; nay, it would not give a favourable idea of any female, who could, with a heart full of one man, give her hand to another. Judge then for your daughter as you would judge for yourself. If she really loves this young man, 'tis time only can wean her from him: if it is only a transient liking, then variety and change of place will do the matter. Only take this as a certain fact, that whoever obtrudes an object on the sight of a person whose head is full of another, though that object is never so pleasing, does but put him in the way of being compared to his disadvantage with the person beloved. I give you, my dear friend, but the advice I followed in the case of my own son: at a very early age, he fell in love with a young lady, whose situation in life was by no means equal to his; and, what was worse, her conduct and disposition was not likely to make him happy.

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This attachment began during a vacation, when it was unfortunately not in my power to have him with me. As I had ever encouraged the most perfect openness to me, he soon made me acquainted with his inclination. I told him my fears very freely, but promised him not to be too hasty in my judgment; and assured him, that, if I found, on enquiry, she was likely to make him steadily happy, I would wave all other considerations. With this kindness he was much pleased, and returned to college with some satisfaction. I was as good as my word. I enquired diligently into her character: I got acquainted with her, without her knowing who I was. Every step I took I wrote Charles word of, and from time to time what I heard of her, and what I saw, and gave him the whole to consider of. I laid his own future rank and fortune before him, which, though not great, yet was above the connections that she would draw him into. Charles was a man of sense, though with strong feeling. When the time came that he was to leave college, which was at the next vacation, I got a friend of mine to invite us to his house, where I met him; and as I was then in an employment that did not suffer me to stay long from home, I left him there; and my friend, who loved him tenderly, and saw him struggling with an expiring passion, took him a tour, with
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several other young men of family. They stopped a day or two at every place of amusement they came to in their ramble, and spun out the time, till the lady's patience (who only wanted to be married) was worn out: she married a shopkeeper of no very high trade; and my son congratulated himself on his own escape, upon hearing by chance of the great unhappiness of the poor shopkeeper, who had got a virago in this angelic creature, and many qualities not likely to make Charles happy. He has since, as you know, met with a young lady of excellent qualities, with whom he is happy. You see, my dear friend, I give you advice freely, and from experience. You know your daughter has always honoured me with a particular share of her affection and attention: I will make it my business to enquire into the young man's behaviour and connections, and freely speak to her on the subject; and you may make yourself easy on her account, if you won't think of any other persons for her, or put them in her way.—When I am master of the young man's character, and manner of living, and all the needful knowledge concerning him, I propose spending some time at my friend's house; and I know her of so open a disposition, that she will soon inform me of her love; and I shall appear shocked and surprised at such a person as Freelove's having made
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any impression on so sensible a young woman, and inform her of all I know of him, as if I had learnt his character without an idea of their attachment. This little art I do not look upon as deceit, because love is a wound, which, as it was made by art, must be healed by it too. Love softens the mind, and rough means but make it cling closer to the dear object it fancies would never use it ill. Lenient means must be taken to extirpate it, and emollients must be used as long as the wound requires them.

I am of opinion, indeed, that, in most cases, harsh means only tend to harden the heart, and make it more obstinately bent to do wrong, except in very young children, who are incapable of being reasoned with; but in riper years, a tender solicitude, lest you do yourself an injury by a wrong action, works more upon the heart, and upon the understanding too (in the above case the latter usually follows, instead of leading the former), than all the sour reasoning that prudence and wisdom can put together. The affections must have room to work; but when you press them down by too strong arguments, when those arguments are over, they will rise still higher for the pressure they have received. The attention should be obtained by engaging the feelings of the hearer, and making the heart warm with grati-
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tude to the kind admonisher, though the inclinations are thwarted by remonstrances. Experience will probably justify the opinion, that human nature is easier led than drove.

ESSAY X.

PASSING the other evening with a gentleman in the country, where every thing seemed formed to give delight and satisfaction, it very much surpris'd me to find, that, amidst the greatest accumulation of delights, amidst an assemblage of every thing that could attract the eye, engage the attention, or please the imagination, with health to enjoy, and money to purchase, every luxury of life; I say, in the midst of this capability of happiness, he seemed insensible to any of the sensations which each of these things in their turn seemed naturally calculated to produce. After having shewn me, in the politest manner, every thing about his house, park, and gardens, which with rapture I saw and enjoyed, with the
same

same insensibility we proceeded to partake of all the luxuries which nature had bountifully provided for our refreshment, and which I thankfully received, as from the kind parent of the universe. This pleasure was much augmented, by the appearance of a fine family of sons and daughters, with a wife at the head, who did honour to her state and station, and whose beauty, though on the decay, was still pleasingly attractive. Still the same insensibility had possession of my friend; and though he received the caresses of his little ones without a frown, it was without a smile too. I narrowly watched him, and could perceive, tho' he talked on numerous subjects, he entered into none of them; till at last, having touched on one, which to me appeared more trifling than any hitherto handled, he became, as it were, a new man; not, indeed, that he entered into it with any vivacity, but with eagerness, and with that volubility of words, and force of argument, that proved it was far from the first time of his considering that subject. It is not material to my readers, nor to the point I want to illustrate, what subject it was that this gentleman had at heart; suffice it to say, that I found he had been disappointed in that one point in the early part of his life, and yet that he made it his grand point—the subject of his constant thoughts, to the utter exclusion

exclusion of every enjoyment which nature and fortune had so richly laid before him. I mounted my horse next morning, and sauntered, as it were, to London, twirling my whip, and meditating on the weakness and wilfulness of human nature, that can for a trifle, or, indeed, for any *one* thing, be it ever so *great*, forego the pleasure of the present moment, for the storing hopes of something that may never be obtained. On my entrance into London I met Bob Brisk, who invited me to his own little dinner of bacon and beans, at the next coffee-house. Well (said I), Bob, what are you in pursuit of? Pursuit of (said he), I never pursued any thing in my life but once, and that was a young lady; and when she turned her back on me, I turned my back on her, made matters even, and resolved never to wish again. I have gone on happily ever since; and when I have nothing of my own, I enjoy what belongs to other people: when I have, I am willing others should have a share; and so I now invite you to my bacon and beans.

Though I am not quite of Bob Brisk's mind, that it is better never to wish,---that is, I would not quite resolve on what I am not quite sure is possible,---yet I am of opinion, from long experience, and every day's proof, that it is the highest folly for any one so to fix their mind on any one object,

object, as to make it absorb all others. Every impulse that is natural to the human mind is innocent, and affords it pleasure, provided it leaves it at liberty to let go the string; if it will not bear to be wound up to the summit; and provided also it leaves it at liberty to enjoy whatever else it meets with in its way. If we would ensure happiness, as far as it regards ourselves, we must avoid letting any one thing be the prevailing subject of our thoughts; if we do, whether it be love, anger, riches, or any other scheme, it will subject us to a thousand and a thousand inconveniences; it will prevent many thoughts, words, and actions, that would otherwise have naturally arisen, and been of great use both to ourselves and others. The freer the mind is kept from particular attentions, the more capable it is of enjoying the pleasures and good things of life, and of entering with perspicuity and ease into the knowledge of any thing that happens to lie in our way: for when the thoughts are disengaged, they are ready for any subject; but when one engrosses them, we grow stupid to every other, and, wrapped up in *that*, forget that the mind was made to take in every idea, both moral and divine; and, surely, it is greatly degraded by being thus cramped and confined. The man who wishes to be rich, frets at every, the most trivial loss. He who is pursuing

pursuing honour, despises the greatest: both these never attain their end, and miss that which is in their power. The man who moderately tries to have enough, looks upon his losses as the common lot of mankind; and, while he aims at more, enjoys what he has. The man who makes honour his point, by really deserving it, knows, that if he misses of it, it is not from want of merit in himself, but from the natural weakness of the human understanding; and therefore, though he does not gain the honour he seeks, he enjoys the esteem of those who truly know him, and the applause of his own mind; and both the one and the other of these men, are open to receive pleasure from the pleasure of others, and to enter into any other subject or employment. A wise person will sometimes consider, whether there is any thing can be amended in his manner of life and conversation; any thing else that he does not do, that would be best done; any thing that he does, that would be best undone. This would soon cut the strong thread that twists his mind to one point of view; as it would shew him how very foolish it is to do all for one end, which end may never be obtained; and, if lost, will have accustomed the mind to dwell upon it so much, as to disable it from truly enjoying what it may. In fine, to keep a disengaged mind, is promotive of happiness to

ourselves and all with whom we live ; and it is as much our interest as it is our duty, not to be too eager in the pursuit of any one object, nor to let our minds dwell continually on any one subject.

ESSAY XI.

IT is a satisfaction to the mind of an upright man, that however he may be disliked, as the hinderance to success of any bad designs, he is, nevertheless, in reality, approved of by the very person whom he disappoints. There are none so very depraved, as not to give the preference to virtue, as virtue, though they do not themselves chuse to practise it. One man intends to defraud another of his right, to blast his fame, injure his fortune, or ensnare his daughter. Another man, perhaps a perfect stranger to the destined victim of deceit, becomes acquainted with the perfidy, and apprises the injured man of the affair. The evil man, in his wrath, vows vengeance against the informer, hates him for disappointing him, and seeks

seeks out another to betray ; and yet, at the very moment of passion, is that man approving of the upright man's conduct, and conscience applauds him for what passion almost curses him : for he knows the action he intended was unbecoming a man, and that preventing it was a high mark of reason and justice. Indeed, I have long been of opinion, that not only approbation, but inclination, is on the side of virtue. It is called inclination or passion, that prompts and drives a man to evil actions : passion, perhaps, it may be, but I think better of human nature than to believe it ever really *inclines* to evil. Something, even at the moment of gratification, in the full tide of passion, in the whirlpool of pleasure ; something, I say, within (more inward than can be discerned by spectators, and even sometimes almost too feeble to give *pain* to the man himself) tells us, there is a better way, a happier way, a more honourable way, than that we are pursuing. Every person we meet, who is better than ourselves, we inwardly honour and envy : nor is there a vicious man in the world so bad as not to feel inferior to the man of virtue, whom he may represent as dull and insipid ; but there is a corner of his heart that does homage to him ; and, if this boaster was to fall into distress, he would much sooner apply to the man he laughed at, than to

the man he laughed with. An upright conduct gains the confidence of those we converse with; and vice, wrapped round in all its webs, cannot quite conceal that spark of heavenly fire that lies within his breast. Throw the wickedest man that ever lived into some particular situation, and the centaur will become the man again. But the case is, and much to be lamented it is, that few men ever fall into those situations that will awaken them: gamesters associate with gamesters, free-thinkers with free-thinkers, drinkers with drinkers, the licentious with the licentious, triflers with triflers. The man of probity, and no wonder, withdraws himself from such society, gets to the other side of the world, as it were, and leaves human nature the wreck he found it.

That there are men that go round and round, for years after years, in the same thoughtless course of sinful pleasures, I fear experience too fully proves; and, while we wonder at the possibility, we must see it realized. But, be the man of the world never so seemingly satisfied with himself, never so averse to change, still there are unseen intervals of reason, which do justice to the cause of virtue. The mind cannot always be on the stretch; there must be hours of relaxation, when all the faculties unbend, when even Satan sleeps; then Conscience wakes, and, if in that happy moment,

moment, the image of a man of worth and virtue rises up in his mind, he for a moment envies, and “ he who envies praises.”—This silent and secret homage of vice to virtue, must, as I began by observing, give every good man pleasure; he can willingly stand the laugh of the multitude, when each individual that compose it, at some time or other, do justice to the cause they deride.

E S S A Y XII.

THE conduct of man is so various on the same occasions, and in the same circumstances, that scarce two men shall act alike in the same situation. To an observer of human nature, this is no small subject for speculation. The faces of men do not differ more than their tempers, nor are their tempers more opposite than their decisions on the conduct to be observed in the same circumstances. The most opposite behaviour is vindicated with the strongest arguments; nay, the most absurd conduct does not want reasons for it by the person acting.

It should seem by this, as if there was no fixed standard of right and wrong, but that each man is at liberty to pursue the path he has marked out for himself. Circumstances and situations are, indeed, so very variable, and lie so very differently, according to the person who meets with them, that no positive arbitrary rule can be given to every one; and yet, to an unprejudiced mind it must appear, that there is a line by which to guide ourselves, and that our end should be the same, though the means to it differ. To express my meaning in few words, there is a propriety of conduct which should be every one's aim; and whatever be the age, sex, situation, or station, still there is a propriety of conduct suited to it, from which we cannot deviate, without renouncing some of that dignity which our nature demands from ourselves, and forfeiting that esteem which we have reason to expect from others. In children, this propriety consists in docility, civility, and good-humour. In youth, in chearfulness, industry, and indefatigable attainment of whatever they are designed for; in modesty, attention, and unaffectedness. In riper years, it shews itself in steadiness of conduct, sincerity of friendship, coolness, greatness of mind, and tenderness of heart. In old age, it is candour, condescension, a contracted circle of life, and a supporting of
virtue.

virtue. These are some of its qualities in the general; and, in particular circumstances, whoever makes this propriety his aim, will soon find the path that points to it. In high life, it is dignity without pomp. In the middle state, it is chearful content, without indolence. In the lower walks of life, it is industry and dependence, without sordidness or servility. In the public affairs of life, it is openness, candour, unshaken integrity, and a strict impartiality. If employed in the cabinet or the senate, or if in any manner called upon to stand forth to view, still these qualities guide the tongue, and guard the heart; or, rather, they are so deeply engraven there, that actions and words are but the signature of what is thought, and what is felt. In private life, it is exactness in the management of our affairs, justice in the strictest line, and generosity and charity when that line ends. It is to friends sincerity, to our families the tenderest affection, to acquaintance civility, to domestics steadiness and kindness, to our enemies a readiness to forgive. It is to our king obedience; to our country, the most unbounded love.

In particular calls of particular affairs, as I observed before, it will be difficult, nay, impossible, to lay down rules; yet to instance in a few may be of use. Suppose a young man to be enamoured of

a young woman, is he to overcome all right reason because he is so? Surely not. She is an object not worthy, perhaps, of his esteem. Is he not to consider the unhappiness he lays up for himself, if he indulges his passion? Would it not become him better to forsake for a time the dangerous spot, and seek out other worthier objects of his favour? The same may be said to the other sex: Shall a young woman, because she has seen a man she likes, think it impossible to set her affection aside, if she judges him unworthy of her esteem? Is she to have no government of herself in this particular, and expect in all others to be perfect mistress of herself? Would it not be becoming her own dignity of character, to recollect herself, to look forward a little, and to anticipate the consequences of this hasty affection? Is there a propriety of conduct to be observed in all other situations of life, and not in this?—this, too, a further advance in which may lead to a state unalterable; when, perhaps, the union of the parties may be as ardently wished to be broken, as it was once to be accomplished.

I have often wondered, how this great inequality of behaviour, in this respect, in both sexes, should come about; how often we shall see some men and women, acting with suitable dignity and propriety in other affairs of life, and with so little
sense

sense and forecast in this very important one. I have made human nature a good deal my study, and have at last found out, that, in the best education, the strictest and most cautious, it seldom or never comes into the head of parents or instructors to apprise their pupils of the dangers they may probably have to encounter in this particular. Young persons go out into the world, with all their passions strong; their heads, perhaps, well stored, but with no rein in their hands, to curb the first sally of unruly passions. Not love alone, but all the passions, want that curb, which an early caution alone can give them. I do not mean to recommend an openness of deportment with a frozen heart. No; I would have the heart dilate at every pleasing object and occasion; but I would have Reason stand guard, and not let Passion loose, till it has asked the question, Is this object worthy? Is this occasion suited to my real feelings? Has not some concurrent circumstances made joy overflow without cause; and has not Art lighted up the flame which Reason should extinguish? If here they pause, and find no check from these questions, then give loose the reins, and take hold on pleasure. But, if the enquiry turn out against the social joy or tender feeling; if the veil is drawn aside, and discovers Art, Folly, and Wretchedness,

ness, then how will they have cause to bless that happy stop, that made them pause on the brink, and mind not the loud cries of passion, or the pleasing feelings of tender regard. Other scenes and other objects there are, which will amply repay the momentary disagreement of passion and reason: they will unite again, and each add to each a keener pleasure.

Thus, through every stage of life, in every situation, propriety of conduct is the greatest human blessing. The greatest caution, without a good judgment, will be undoubtedly liable to error; but the best judgment, without that caution which gives it time to exert itself, is useless. I have known many a very sensible person do very inconsiderate and foolish things; and, in excuse, he says, I did not consider, or I should not have done so: but so far from an excuse is this, that it is a great aggravation. For a man or a woman of confined parts, to do a precipitate thing, or say an imprudent one, is excuseable, because it is pitiable; but, for a person with good sense, or at least with a power of having good sense, to act and speak amiss, from inconsideration, is unpardonable. A friend of mine, who, with an excellent heart, has not, perhaps, the very brightest genius, has yet so cultivated this art of consideration, that, among all his numerous acquaintance,

for

for he is beloved by every one, he has never given any one offence. In all family quarrels, each party fly to him: he either heals their divisions, by softening their grievances, or, at the least, shews a feeling for each, without either of them knowing the other has entrusted him. Amanda was another instance of this sort of propriety: a habit of reflection had made her acquainted with the human heart, and she studiously avoided all occasions of grieving or hardening it. She was often privately advised with on affairs of importance; and, as she had led a very active and variable life, she generally used to say, I was once much in your case; I did so and so, for such and such reasons, and it succeeded. In short, such was the great circumspection she observed in all she said and did, and so conspicuous was the propriety of her own conduct, during her whole life, that numbers resorted to her for advice and comfort; nay, persons very little known to her, would write to her for counsel, in the most arduous affairs of life: and, as her life was a blessing to all who knew her, so her death was felt by many who never saw her.

Such characters as these dignify human nature; and, while we are ready to cry out, on one hand, Frailty, thy name is Woman, we are awed, on the other, into silent admiration, at the perfection
to

to which Woman can attain. I cannot here refrain from heaving a sigh, at the sad thought of the wide distance there is between the possibilities of the human race and their usual attainments, But I will curb the too tender reflection, and only offer one wish, that all would shew the bright side of their character, and be really to the world what nature dictates and what reason approves,

ESSAY XIII.

AMONG the various speculations that Essayists have ventured on the world, there is one which, however they have begun with telling us the doubtfulness of, their determination has always ended with giving full costs of suit to one side. The subject which I at present allude to, is that of the pleasure of the Artist and the Connoisseur, compared with the mere Man of Nature. After treating this subject as a matter of doubt, a writer (who is probably a Connoisseur) concludes with a great many instances, where

where the Man of Nature is left far behind in pleasure and gratification. I, who am no Connoisseur or Artist, shall in this paper *professedly* stand up for the Man of Nature; that is, supposing him a man of sense, and as such, in some degree, a man of taste. I take the pleasure of a man of an incorrect taste to be as different from that of an artist or a connoisseur, as the pleasure of a person who is pursuing a happiness is from that of one who has attained it.

By a Connoisseur, I do not wish to be understood one who is ridiculous in displaying his knowledge, but one who really possesses it. This, I think, may be called fair play. Here then we set out together; and, to endeavour to bring proofs to support my opinion (which, however, at best, I only mean to hazard as an opinion), I shall give an account of two gentlemen whom I lately accompanied in a tour round the environs of London, and to some of our capital artists in the metropolis. As we wished not to be known, we agreed to go in Mr. Easy's coach, which was a plain, easy, and convenient one, as the elegant taste displayed in Mr. Bright's would have effectually announced the owner. We stopped at a gentleman's, whose house had been newly built, and his gardens lately laid out. Easy cried out, on the approach, how beautiful that is! It is an elegant

elegant building, and the place promises to suit it. Mr. Bright was silent. On a nearer view, he said, there are some capital faults in the architecture; and pointed out to us what they were. We could not but acknowledge his criticism just. We then proceeded to the gardens: we all equally admired the taste of the owner, and should have come away with our minds delighted, had not Mr. Bright unfortunately started, that there was no water, and that a river running through the lawn, would make it compleat; but that it looked very dull without it. My friend Easy was vexed, but owned the truth of the observation. The next place we drove to was a professed gardener's and nurseryman; who had taste enough to plant all his flowers in a well-laid-out garden; his shrubs in an extensive and beautiful shrubbery; and his young trees so as that imagination could look forward to a large wood. Through all these ran walks of neat gravel, and a little purling stream was led meandering along, for the purpose of watering the various plants. Here Mr. Bright, who is a florist, and herbist, and treeist (if I may use the expression), was perfectly in his element; and here, one should think, he would have every advantage of us poor ignoramus's; but 'tis here chiefly I do not yield to him. Finding Mr. Bright and the gardener likely to be pretty
 prolix

prolix in their discourse, Mr. Easy and I strolled on through the grounds: we stopped at every different plantation, feasting our eyes with the various beauties of the flowers; regaling all our senses with the sweets of the innumerable different shrubs; and listening with delight to the multitude of little songsters this plantation had brought together. We went on, in an extacy of delight, and admiring the thought of the gardener, who had added beauty to profit; till at length, following the little stream, we came to a grotto, through the back of which issued the spring that supplied the rill. The grotto was large, the shells curious, at least beautiful, and we seated ourselves in two moss seats, in the recesses on each side the door. After surveying the place, and pleasing ourselves for some time, finding out the different shells, in which my friend was no novice, we began to reflect on the various sorts of lives which the people of England lead. Scarce, says Mr. Easy, two live in the same manner. This man, I dare say, has no rival: he stands alone, in having found out, that a mere nurseryman, who is to sell flowers and plants for the adornment of others grounds, can with these very articles render a place of his own equally delightful with those of his purchasers. He has real merit, and seems to have a great and good collection. Just as we were
thus

thus regaling ourselves, and commending the poor nurseryman, I heard him say, in a discontented tone, I don't know, Sir, Lord Smellto't, and every body that has been here these two years past, has admired my collection. Well enough, returned Mr. Bright, but some capital things are wanting; however, when you have got those few, it will be a very good collection. As he spoke he entered the grotto. I am heartily tired, says he. Tired! replied Mr. Easy; I think I could live here a week, and not feel any sensation but pleasure. How beautiful this grotto is, Sir! Yes, well enough, returned he. Did you observe, said Mr. Easy, with what taste he has laid out the plantations? Yes, indeed, said Mr. Bright, very well; but I was more intent on the shrubs, and flowers, and plants themselves, than at their placing. You know I delight in that study, and flatter myself I understand it. But you don't seem refreshed by it, said I. No, says he, I am very hot. But we are very cool, and have been in extacy with all we have seen and heard; and if you will sit and cool a little, and send away the gardener, we will endeavour to make you find out some beauties in this place. One I have, says he; there's the yellow carnation, the single-leaved rose, the infected oak—He was running on at this rate, when Bright, interrupting him, said,

said, Yes, Sir, I observed them all, and can tell you where they stand ; but I want you just now to forget *individuals*, and take the whole place into your mind. Well, well, says he, we can see it as we walk back, and it's time to be gone. In this manner we went on from place to place, till at length, in the dusk of the evening, we arrived at a gentleman's seat, the gloomy appearance of which was not very pleasing after the lively scenes of the foregoing part of the day. It was, however, no doubt, built and designed in great taste. My friend Bright was quite in raptures ; he ran through the apartments in extacy, and was high in the praise of the whole. Mr. Easy also admired the building, and the unity of the whole appearance ; but his admiration was calm and sedate. As to myself, I saw the great knowledge of the Gothic that was carried throughout, but the gloom that very perfection caused gave me no pleasure. I stole away from my friends, and went into the garden, and was unfortunately examining a curious exotic, when Mr. Bright joined me :—I say unfortunately, for I was in a deep reverie, admiring the infinite goodness of that Being, who, in every part of the world, plants herbs meet and fit for the use and pleasure of its respective inhabitants ;—when Mr. Bright roused me out of my contemplation, and said with

a smile, clapping me at the same time on the shoulder, Now, my dear friend, you don't, I dare say, know how this plant is propagated, nor what are its peculiarities. Oh yes, said I, I do; I know it's a medicinal herb in it's native soil. That, says he, may be; but there are four different plants of this same species, two of one sex, and two of another. I found he was going to give me a genealogical account of the whole species; so I pulled out my watch, and observed we should be late in town.

The next morning we agreed to go to the several artists of eminence in town, and to the Museum. But not to be further tedious, when I had enjoyed a great deal of pleasure from the first impression of a picture, and a great deal more from Mr. Easy's manner of pointing out the beauties of it, Mr. Bright was piercing into all the defects of it, comparing it with others far superior, and pulling us down to disgust, when we had got upon the pinnacle of approbation. I do not mean to say, he saw no beauties; he really was a true Connoisseur, and traced excellence in what he saw; but he also omitted no opportunity of finding a blemish; so that pleasure and pain hung in equilibrium through the whole of our perambulations; and though I was pleased with the justness of his criticisms, yet I could not help
feeling

feeling I should have had more satisfaction if I had been alone with Mr. Easy. On the whole, when I came home to my lodgings, I found no difficulty to pronounce, that a sensible man, who looks on Nature with an enlarged mind, and on her representatives by Artists with a liberal one, enjoys more rapture in the one, and more satisfaction in the other, than the minute Philosopher and the exact Critic.

I must here just observe what occurs to me, not pretending to confute what seems to be established by the learned, concerning the nature of plants, which are now declared to be of different sexes. Were I to consult the oldest book I know upon this subject, I should be apt to conclude, that no such thing existed; for it is there said, that God created every *living* thing, male and female, but every herb was created with seed in itself: so that, though some may bear a seed, and others may not, yet the tree that has the seed, has it from itself, and propagates its kind by itself.

E S S A Y X I V .

I WAS the other day invited by a friend of mine to go out of town with him, who is generally so good to indulge me with staying a day or two with him to enjoy the country at this fine season of the year. I am always much charmed with his manner of living, but more with the great pleasure he takes in it himself, which seems chiefly to proceed from seeing others happy about him, from his own management, as much as from that inward peace which always accompanies the good man. His dependants, numerous as they are, look upon him as a kind of father and their best friend; and all the country take the greatest delight in his conversation, and he is sure to be not only the most agreeable, but the most lively man in company. His house is elegant and delightfully situated, and stands on a small rising with a fine lawn before it commanding a most extensive prospect; and behind it is a most noble hanging wood. Into this wood he led me the evening after I came down, when, after passing through many turnings and windings, and seeing many
rural

rural buildings, such as cottages, root-houses, &c. we gained insensibly the top of the wood, and entered into a broad green walk, at the end of which stands the noblest building I ever saw; a kind of temple, to which you ascend by a flight of steps, which part in the middle, and lead you to each end of the building; at the fore part of which are four large pillars, in niches in each of which stands a figure. The back part of this edifice is in a circular form, with seats around it. The four figures represent *Religion*, *Nature*, *Wisdom*, and *Contemplation*. *Contemplation* is a young man sitting down, his head resting on his hand, and his eyes fixed on the ground; this figure rather inclines toward *Wisdom*, who stands on his left hand: he is an old man, has a pen in one hand, and in the other a *book half* wrote: the most profound gravity with a mixture of perplexity is visible in his countenance. *Nature* is the most beautiful figure I ever saw: a woman with her hair hanging down her waist, and a loose robe wrapped round her, that seems of her own making, and composed of leaves and flowers; her air is elegant and easy; her aspect serene and smiling: she seems to cast a look towards *Religion*, to whom the figure itself rather turns. *Religion* is sitting down; her countenance perfectly composed, expressive of the most entire satisfaction:

she has in one hand the Bible, which she holds out to the other figures, and with the other she points to the inside of the temple, which my friend calls the Temple of Happiness.—On turning about at entering this building, you are surprised with the most beautiful prospect that imagination can paint; the wood just below you discovering all the seats we had passed; the house, the lawn, and the prospect beyond, made still more extensive by the height we had gained.—Here, said my friend, I pass an hour or two every day, and amuse myself with thinking what each of those figures would say to me, if they could speak.—*Contemplation*, I imagine, would speak to me thus: “Man, “hearken unto me; follow not the giddy multitude; they cannot lead you to Wisdom, and “without Wisdom you cannot find the way to “happiness.”—*Wisdom*, I then fancy, would next make his speech: “Though the way to me is “rough, yet you will find pleasure in my company; and though not all the knowledge you “wish for is within my reach, yet I will shew “you the way to the seat of happiness by my “daughter Virtue, who never fails to gain admittance for her votaries.”—*Nature*, I think, would thus bespeak me: “*Friend*, observe your “form; it is erect, and every way proper for the “uses you would wish it.— You feel yourself en-
“dowed

“dowed with the noblest faculties ; you feel your
 “soul bent on happiness. Survey that prospect :
 “though it pleases the eye, though it yields suf-
 “ficient for your body, yet your soul is not satis-
 “fied ; it seems capable of, and to long for, more
 “refined pleasures. You know you did not give
 “yourself all those faculties, and this desire of hap-
 “piness ; they must therefore be the gift of some
 “more perfect and wiser Being : to please him
 “then must be the only way to be happy, and to
 “keep your nature as perfect as you can, must be
 “the only way to please him. Follow me, we
 “shall meet with Virtue, and she no doubt will
 “lead us to happiness.” *Religion*, methinks, would
 last address me, and *smiling* say, “Thou mortal
 “and immortal, read this book, and be happy.”

I thanked my friend for his condescension in
 thus freely communicating his thoughts to me,
 and assured him they should not be lost upon me.
 It is with this sort of communing with my own
 heart, says he, that I fit myself to live in the world
 for others only. He then took a key out of his
 pocket, and opened a door at the back part of the
 building, which was so well concealed I had not
 seen it : this opened into a spacious room which
 had windows every way, or rather it was all glass,
 except the side we entered at ; and I found myself
 standing on the brink of a hill, and looking down

into the most delightful valley I ever saw, richly ornamented with churches, villages, and a noble river that meandered through the middle. Having taken a view of this enchanting prospect, I surveyed the inside of this glass room, and found in several parts of it tables with implements for various employments, as drawing, geography, mathematics, astronomy, musical instruments, &c. so that persons might follow their several studies without the trouble of bringing the materials with them. Here we found a daughter about fourteen, taking a view of the country below, and a son about a year older, studying mathematics, on which he was so intent, that he never perceived us till we spoke to him, when he cried out to his father, with great joy, that he believed he had found out what they had puzzled so much about; but I will not be sure, says he, till you have proved it. I hope you have, says my friend; tis time I should leave off, and tis fit you should be encouraged to go on. We then walked up to the young lady, who shewed her father the drawing she was about, and, with the most eager look, waited his decision. He returned it to her, bidding her begin another. This seemed to give her some uneasiness; but he soon added, with the most affectionate smile, "for this cannot be mended." In the middle of the room stands a large clock with

with a dial plate every way, so that wherever you are placed you can see the hour, which indeed you have need to be reminded of in this enchanting scene. I had almost forgot to mention, that the whole side of the room we came in at is filled up with books; so that nothing is wanting that can employ the mind. We left the young people to pursue their studies, and returned through the temple into the wood, where we met my friend's wife and the rest of the family come out to meet us. I expatiated to her on the beauties of the place, and the many agreeable things I had seen. I am very glad you like them, Sir, said she, with a smile that lighted up all her features. It is impossible to do otherwise, Madam, said I; though perhaps I admire the happiness you give to others still more than those objects that seem to make but a part of your own. Sir, said she, I think the chief employment of our *actions* ought to be the good of *others*, and the chief employment of our *thoughts*, our own eternal happiness. We are born to live for ever, and the circumstance of our death is only the division of one part of our being from the other; and, says she, if I may be allowed the metaphor, this first part is only like the preface to a book, wherein we foretel what we are to be in the greater part of our volume of existence! She then conducted us to a rural building,

ing, where we found a large table covered with fruits of all kinds, and a syllabub in the middle, and several of the neighbours, assembled there, waiting our arrival. A little messenger was dispatched to the industrious young ones we had left in the temple, that they might come and partake of our repast, over which we were all exceeding merry.

I left this amiable family with the greatest regret, and could not help reflecting how much pleasure the generality of the world lose by the wrong direction of their minds, and how suited the dispositions of my friends are to every station of life; for it is not their situation makes them happy, but the directing their thoughts and actions to justice, benevolence, and virtue.

ESSAY XV.

COMING home the other evening a little before my usual supper-time, I strolled into my fields. The sun was sunk below the horizon, and the grey twilight came on apace; an owl sat moaning on a bough not far off, and the village clock struck nine. Not a breeze moved among the leaves; reflection, the constant companion of solitude and silence, awakened in my breast some tender sensations, and brought to my mind the joys that were past, and not the joys alone, but the terrors also, that were almost dead to my remembrance: nature gave way and made me drop a tear for both; but reflection of a better kind soon took possession of my mind, and led me to consider that the miseries I thought on were past, and the joys I remembered were an allay to past and present sorrows. I looked up and beheld the stars lighting up their lamps, and the moon's sharp crescent stood distinct in the sky. Perhaps I shall one day have as clear a conception of those worlds as of this; perhaps I shall inhabit one of those shining worlds, and I may, at this moment,

see

see my appointed station. A little time, and I shall be as far from this world as I am now from those I view. Each of them, perhaps, holds inhabitants that have finished their probationary state with honour, and have obtained the crown of glory. A little while, and all that now oppresses me will oppress me no more; but all that now delights me shall delight for ever: for the mind is so pure, that, unless defiled by passion and prejudice, it will take pleasure only in things that are pure; whatever is so will give pleasure, and that pleasure will last to all eternity. Though the mists of error and passion may obscure the bright beams of the soul, yet, in her original state, nothing that is not perfect can give her satisfaction. Let me then, said I to myself, dispel every thought that taints the divine spark within me, and chase away from it every thing that disgusts and disturbs it; let it remain pure as the fountain whence it flowed; at least, let its wishes and its joys be such, that in ages to come it may have no change to make in either. While these thoughts arose in my mind, I wandered on beyond my own boundary, till at last I was within sight of the sea. The waves came slowly on, making that kind of even, solemn noise, that awes the mind into all the wonder and adoration that must ever arise from the sight of that astonishing object. The
calmness

calmness of the night left the sea to its own motion, and the waves flowed unruffled to the shore, and receded when they touched their appointed boundary.—But the night stole on apace, and the moon had sunk in darkness. I hastened to my home, and, after eating a slender meal, retired to my rest, not unsatisfied with my evening's walk. My mind indeed was so well pleased with it, that, unwilling to forget it, she called on imagination to assist her in continuing the scene which sleep had hid from my eyes. I was again by the sea side, when a vessel appeared in the offing, and by slow degrees approached the shore, and anchored by the beach on which I stood. Instead of the noise usually made by sailors on their coming to shore, I was surprised to find them keep a profound silence, though very busy in the management of their vessel. While I was considering the cause of this remarkable circumstance, an old man of a very venerable aspect descended out of the ship, and, leaving his company, advanced slowly up to me. I shuddered as he came near me; a sudden chill seized all my powers. He looked at me with a calm countenance, and, surveying me with an enquiring eye, said—Young man, of what are you afraid? What have you done to me, that renders my approach so painful to you? By the concern you are under, I perceive I need not
acquaint

acquaint you that my name is *Time*. You are, I suppose, sensible that you have not always used me as you ought; you think I am come to take my leave of you, and are aware that I have it in my power to revenge your neglects. At these words I fell at his feet. Rise, says he, and hear me. To all mankind I am the worst of foes or the best of friends: some indeed court me more than others; some use me very ill, while others treat me with indifference: but though my anger rise not to equal revenge on all, yet none that use me either slightly or cruelly shall escape punishment; but to those that use me as their friend, that care for my attendants that fill up my board, that use days and hours with friendship, and rely on them for their future welfare, to them I shall give such rewards as will more than answer all their expectation. I am come from eternity, of which that ocean is but a faint resemblance, and am returning to it again. Tossed on the billows of the world, I still maintain my course, and touch at shore whenever I please, to take in passengers to convey them to another world. I am ever present, though forgotten or unregarded, with each individual of your world. To you, young man, I am now sent, to admonish you, that it is not the transient contemplation of an hour, 'tis not the chance of an evening's walk,
that

that will ensure my friendship : these are pleasing to me, and may be useful to you, but they are only so as they tend to make you cultivate my acquaintance, and employ every assistance I lend you, to your own particular good, or that of your fellow creatures. I warn you, in a solemn manner, not to let our parting moment be the first of your acquaintance with my value. An hour will come, when we must part never to meet again, when I shall have done all I could for you, and must then resign you to that sentence which your conduct towards me will justify. My elder brother will then take possession of you, and instead of your being empowered to use him as you please (as you now can do me) he will have absolute power over you. Let not then our parting be bitter, but sweet unto you. Caress me, and use me as I wish to be used, as a friend. Let us be innocent when chearful, and not melancholy when serious ; but let an even temper and steady conduct secure my best countenance while you live, and my friendship when we part to meet no more. Farewel ! The morn approaches ; consider my words and be wise. So saying, he walked gracefully from me, and mounting his vessel, the sails filled, and he joined the boundless ocean.

E S S A Y XVI.

TO derive amusement from business, and improvement from pleasure, is not impossible to such a mind as man's; but it is reserved alone for the thinking and the speculative. The man of business may have his hours of amusement, but they are separate from those of his occupation; the man of pleasure may have his hours of reflection, but they are usually far removed from the seat of festivity: but to a mind turned for contemplation, the gay scene and the busy one are alike capable of affording the sweets of speculation. Even his own particular business or amusements cannot entirely fill the mind of a person so disposed, but it will find a chink where to give entrance to subjects of intellectual exercise. It cannot wholly divest itself of its propensity to reflection. There is but one subject which is sufficient to fill, or which can even for a moment engross reflection. I mean religion. Religion, indeed, is the proper region of a contemplative mind. It there can dilate itself, and as itself can be set no bounds to, so, in that vast ocean, it finds none; but

but when it has wearied itself in wonder, and run through all the subjects which religion affords, then can it be refreshed from the same source, and drink of the fountain whence it flows; and, wrapped in admiration and love, mount up to the throne of God, and in imagination join with angels in songs of praise.

But I am unawares run into reflections of a more serious nature than I intended: however, I hope they are not unbecoming, when the mind of man is the subject of our thoughts; that inexplicable maze, in which we may wander for years and ages, yet never thoroughly comprehend it. The more we consider it, the less we are able to discern the cause of that seemingly great difference there is in its operation: for, comparatively speaking, few men are of a speculative turn, yet all have reason and reflection. But, I should suppose, it is partly owing to education, and partly to the natural disposition. A person of a very busy, active spirit, does not very often reflect deeply; though I know one or two instances to the contrary of this assertion; but I speak in the general. Neither does one of a very dull, inactive turn, exert himself in reflection. But it is usually found in him whose retired education has habituated his mind to think, and who has rather heard of the world than seen it; who had, at least, heard of it

before he had seen it, and enters it rather to observe it than act in it. Such a one goes into the world as he goes into a theatre; to be a spectator; to speculate on the persons of the great drama, on their manners, and on the various characters they sustain; considering them as acting and filling up the scenes of life in all their different occupations. Not that the man of thought is himself always an idle spectator; indolence seldom accompanies that sort of person, as I have before observed: but, though he is busy, he is not absorbed in business; though he is gay, he cannot be dissipated. Self-possession is generally the attendant on this man of reflection, and he rarely is either very rich or very poor. He is too indifferent to be ambitious, and too cautious to sink into poverty.

Perhaps it is well for the world that no more of them are ponderers: for the love of riches, of power, and of pleasure, are the three great engines that set the inhabitants of it at work. The wheel goes round, and winds one up and lays another low; each in his turn feeling a reverse of fortune, and striving to gain what another has lost: for, I suppose, in the course of a century, there is scarce a family that has not experienced honour and dishonour, riches and poverty. A spendthrift succeeds to a miser, and a miser to a spendthrift; an honourable man succeeds to a
base

base one, and a base one to an honourable one: so through life a steady eye may view the passions of men causing their fortunes to vary, and good and evil alternately befalling, not each individual, indeed, but each family almost, that can come within our observation.

This, as it is matter of employment to the mind of man, so it ought to be matter of improvement to him also; for reflection is of little use, unless it makes us better as well as wiser.

ESSAY XVII.

THE enjoyment of our faculties is so common a blessing, that we are apt to overlook it, till we are reminded of the greatness of their value either by being deprived of them ourselves, or seeing others that are so. It has been often a point discussed in conversation, which of our senses we had rather lose. Some are persuaded that to be deaf would be the greatest of evils; others, that the loss of sight would be so to them. Certain it

is, that deaf people are often very dull, and blind ones very chearful. The reasons of this difference are many. It is with difficulty we can give any entertainment to a deaf person, and mankind love both to give pleasure and to receive it with ease : the deaf are therefore often neglected, and sit by whole evenings in the midst of a chearful circle, without any one offering to impart to them the subject of conversation that passes among them. Both the inattention of the company, and their own incapacity of joining in discourse, depress their spirits, and, in a course of time, add melancholy to misfortune. The blind can enjoy society without giving it much trouble, and can laugh and be merry with the best of them. Another reason that helps to make a blind man chearful, is, that he can never be alone; his blindness requires a companion. A third reason that may be assigned is, that, as he cannot employ himself, he must talk, and he that talks will be sure to have hearers, and he that can hear will be sure to have talkers. Thus the blind man's circle is numerous and generally merry ; the deaf man's is scanty and grave. The deaf can walk alone, therefore does not need an assistant: he is upbraided as troublesome, while the blind is courted because he can court. It would seem hard-hearted, perhaps, to exclude the deaf from society, which, it is apparent,

parent, they ever are striving to seem to enjoy, tho' it is not in their power to do so; but, I am persuaded, were such unhappy persons to draw the circle of their acquaintance within a very narrow boundary, they would be more happy, and in consequence more chearful; for no doubt every one would find some with humanity enough to strive to give them every relief and entertainment in their power, and the gratitude of the unfortunate would amply repay every trouble they could have in affording amusement to a fellow-creature whose case might have been their own. The deaf, too, might find relief in books of every kind, particularly in those of a less abstruse nature; for, perhaps, the loss of hearing may deaden some of the finer parts of the understanding, and therefore every thing that strains that should be avoided. They might also be desired to put such remarks as occurred to them, either from reading, or from what they observed in company, in writing; which whoever is with them should appear to take pleasure in reading. This would induce them to read, and be in company with more pleasure, supposing that the kind friend who loves and adheres to them will afterwards derive pleasure from their observations. I have ventured to throw out these opinions with regard to the deaf, as they seem particular objects of our com-

passion, though not so obviously so as the blind. Few can pass a blind person without a sigh, if he is rich, and an out-stretched hand, if he is poor ; but the deaf must be content to bear their calamity in silence, and thousands may pass them by unregarded. Indeed, Providence has ordained it so, that few among those who get their bread are deaf, and that few who are blind are suffered to starve. Our sight meets the poor wretch that has none, and in the moment when we view him, we are sensible of the blessing he has lost. But even the blind beggar is seldom alone ; for though his dog may be his only visible companion, I believe, few there are but have their jovial one, when the alms of the day are received. But, though I have said thus much in compassion to the deaf, and to prove why one is grave, and the other gay ; yet I confess, that, were it not for the apparent superior comforts in one misfortune to those of the other, I should look upon the loss of sight as the greatest of all personal calamities. Indeed, so very dear is this faculty to me, that I seldom view any object with delight, and not at the same time reflect with rapture on the means by which I enjoy it. I seldom read a line that brings me pleasure, without feeling thankful for the blessing by which I enjoy it. Were this great misfortune to befall me, I hope I should submit to it as be-

comes

comes one who knows that He who gave has a right to take away ; but more than half my joys would fail me : I could survey the heavens no more ! I could see the fields, the trees no more !---I could see my children no more,---could see no more their sportive plays,---could see no more their growth and improvements ! Nature shudders at the thought. To be deaf, I will acknowledge, is a dreadful lot, and shuts out the conversation of our friends ; and none but those, perhaps, who experience it, can fully be sensible of the misfortune. I would, in that case, seclude myself from society ; I would have none about me that would not bear with my infirmity ; I would fly the world, and bend my mind to contemplation, to reading, to walking ; to every thing that I could enjoy alone, supposing I was capable of hearing. But all, I know, would not be adequate to one hour's conversation with a real friend. Perhaps, the trial is never more compleat, of who is such, than when, by some accidental misfortune, we are deprived of that faculty ; as it must be a friend indeed, who takes the trouble to give pleasure to another, without any hopes of a return. The loss of any of our powers is so sad a circumstance, that those who enjoy them all, ought to be truly sensible of the happiness, and of the use which ought to be made of them.

E S S A Y XVIII.

STEALING from a set of company one evening, whose conversation had ceased to be either agreeable or instructing, I rambled in deep contemplation on the importance it was to us to cultivate all the faculties with which we are endowed. The birds sung, and the cattle were just loosed from their geers. How pleasant, thought I, is it to see the various animals pass away their existence in the exercise of their several faculties, and fulfil the duties of their station ! The boundary of their time is narrow, and yet how highly conducive to the happiness of the creature man ! how are their moments employed to benefit, serve, or please, that great lord of the creation ! yet he, to himself unkind, the least endeavours to be useful, agreeable, or beneficial, either to himself or others. Far be it from me to say that none are useful ; for all, I believe, are more or less so in the course of their lives : but few in proportion are there, who *make* it their *business*, who esteem it part of what is required of them, to live in such a manner,

manner, and to do such things, as perpetually to render service or pleasure to their fellow creatures, or benefit to themselves. Our time is our great charter of liberty, which if we break or violate, we become disturbers of the public tranquillity. While we have the command of our faculties, we should consider them as powers whereby much benefit or much mischief may be derived to ourselves or others. Our actions should tend to convince the world, that they proceed from principle, and are not determined by passion or interest; but by an uniform conduct we should prove that we are masters of ourselves, and that our guides are both our hearts and heads. Our words should prove, that no deceit is under our tongue; and the consistency of our words with our actions should evince that we speak the language of truth. Sincerity should guide us, and a pleasing manner not be forgot: gentle language, joined to a stedfast heart, constitutes a great and good man. But, not only in the larger scale of words and actions in general should we be useful and amiable, but in the minuter scenes, in the shadier haunts of life, we should endeavour to deserve the title of Philanthropist. Our Creator has formed us with powers to make ourselves and others happy: in order to do this, we should consider every one within our reach as having in some measure

measure a claim to our humanity; at least, they so far have a claim to it, as never to suffer from us in the slightest degree; and if a positive, as well as a negative good, is in our power, we should not neglect the opportunity. Tho', with regard to the other world, we are particularly to look to ourselves; yet, with respect to this, every one has a right to our attention. To endeavour to make others happy, is surely most becoming a rational being; indeed, it is that power which distinguishes mankind from the brute creation, and, next to our immortality, is our highest honour; nay, it is a proof of it, for if we were all to die like the beasts that perish, like them we might eat and drink, and mind only our own concerns, giving this very sufficient reason for so selfish a conduct, "To-morrow I may die, and see you no more." But, as we are immortal, we have a call of a superior nature: we are all hastening to a world, where reciprocal good offices will make great part of our happiness. I do not know whether it has been ever observed by others, but a little consideration will convince us, that brutes are never prompted to action merely to make one another happy. It is true, they love society, and indeed are not happy without it; but it does not proceed from the desire of communicating pleasure to their companions, but from sociableness implanted in their nature, and a want of that

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contemplative faculty which enables a rational being to enjoy *itself*. But it was reserved for man alone to have the extatic pleasure arising from giving happiness to another: he can, even by a smile, light up a joy in the breast of his companion, and fill it with gratitude and love: he can diffuse pleasure to society, and bring cheerfulness where gloom reigned before: he can taste the godlike pleasure of healing the wounded heart, though he should not have the means of letting the oppressed go free: he can, by his uniformity of conduct, give countenance and support to his domestics, dependents, and friends: in his words he can chase away fear, by gentleness and courtesy; he can use even his thoughts to benefit his own race. In every stage of life, in every department, in the humble, as well as in the more exalted line, can this philanthropy bless our fellow-creatures: all have it in their power to be a happiness to those around them; and it becomes beings, who are capable of reflection, first to know their powers, and then to exert them. This power of communicating happiness is amply repaid, repaid fourfold into our bosoms; for we become by it the favourites of heaven and earth, and find a pleasure here within, that softens every grief, and heightens every joy; for he who gives pleasure can never fail to enjoy it.

ESSAY

E S S A Y XIX.

TO the now enlightened human understanding, nothing appears more extraordinary, than that men, esteemed for their wisdom, could ever hold it as a mark of courage to put an end to their existence. That an act committed through fear should be called courage, certainly implies a paradox, though at the same time there are proofs sufficient of its reality. The ancients, who spoke of suicide with honour, and those who actually performed it, could only shelter themselves under the courage required to do the act itself, and forgot the cause of that courage was a total want of it in regard to the thing it was to deliver them from. Had they directed that courage to the bearing the evils they shunned, they would have stood the shock with honour and dignity; but cowardice with regard to bearing pain, either of body or of mind, made them adopt an opinion which was in itself a contradiction to that firmness of mind they endeavoured to establish by it. But I would ask from whence arise our juster notions of this extraordinary action? Do we find that any but
heathens

heathens ever placed it among deeds of heroism? How came Patience with all her healing balms to be crowned with the honours formerly sacrilegiously given to Suicide? Does it not proceed from that fountain of light from whence every truth proceeds? Do we find that the Jews, amidst all their great calamities, adopted so strange a custom? Saul, indeed, died on his sword; but we know he was far from being a wise or good man, possessed at times with an evil spirit. He, in the disappointed moment of a lost battle, pursued by his enemies, who would the next instant have murdered him, falls on his own sword, to avoid the disgrace of dying by a heathen's. Here was no time for consideration; but the persons I am speaking of, deliberately perform the act, and call witnesses to prove their heroism in it. Strange, yet speaking proof, that all human wisdom is vain. One line from the hand of Him who created us, is able to blast all the arguments of volumes of the wisest of men. "These afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Here is Patience, arrayed in all her charms, crowned with immortal honour. She invites us to moderation here, that she may feast us with a high repast hereafter. She soothes every grief, holding in one hand the cup of everlasting life, and supporting
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with the other the drooping head of Sorrow. But the knowledge that she has these comforts to bestow, proceeds, as I have observed, from that ray of light which darts upon us from above. Surely, then, while we condemn, and justly, the mistaken heathen, we should prove we are worthy of our better knowledge; and, by true courage, support the evils that are the lot of man.

ESSAY XX.

THE thirst of the present age after diversions is so intense, that little time is spared for affairs of either great or small consequence. The women consume half their hours in dressing for the amusements that take up the other half, and though sleep is now and then introduced, it is submitted to with reluctance; and, I am sorry to say, the men seem to esteem dress as a thing of the highest importance, both in themselves and the women. Without endeavouring to convince

convince people that dress and amusements are not the most important employments of our lives, nor tend the most to give us pleasure, I shall propose a scheme which occurred to me the other day, by which persons who devote their lives to pleasure (as it is called) might be much furthered in their daily labour, and by which they might perform it with greater ease to themselves, and might less incommode other people. I would set a subscription on foot for building a long, wide street, long enough for the reception of all those who chose to give up themselves to those diversions that are in vogue: annexed to this street I would have a circle of buildings, in which should be performed, operas, plays, and concerts, of all sorts, comic and serious, old and new. There should be *dramatis personæ* enough to begin one performance as soon as the other was over; I mean the same kind of diversion; for I would have all kinds going on at the same time: and a door of communication from one place to another, with two galleries, one for all that chose to go to another place, and the other for those that came from it; so that every half hour the amusement might be varied, if the party thought fit. There should be also a communication from house to house, which should at last end in the great circle allotted for diversions; so that all kinds of conveyance would
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be quite unnecessary, except any should happen to be old, to whom the same diversions were as needful as when they were young ; for these, a sedan chair might be kept, and they conveyed in it along the common gallery. I should observe, that I would have only one side of the street occupied by those people who know the world ; on the other side I would place their necessary tradesfolk, and in every house just opposite should live, on the ground floor a hair-dresser, on the middle one a milliner, and in the attic a mantua-maker. A bell should go across the street into each floor, as all those people would be continually wanted, from the hour of waking, at two, till the beginning of the employments, at ten. The important article of eating might be supplied from a great cook's shop at the back of the houses ; and, as all people of taste like the same thing, it would be easy for one general *maitre d'hotel* to be appointed provider for the whole society, each house to allow him a large income, which might spare them the fatigue of looking over a bill of fare ; and, in like manner, all other necessities of life might be provided by a person well qualified for such an undertaking : the rest of their estates to be given up entirely to the *amusement-maker*, who should be thoroughly instructed and arrived at the highest pitch of knowledge with

with regard to music, dancing, masquerades, stage effect, &c. When all that chose to enter this way of life were settled in their habitations, I would take no farther notice of them. The inhabitants of the metropolis might enjoy their liberty, and be permitted to go to diversions, or stay at home, just as they pleased; and, perhaps, if places of diversion opened about three or four times a week, they would answer to their name.

This my project for the public good, I should think, would be well received; as the knowing ones need not then mix with those that know nothing, and that cannot guess whether music is good or bad, or a dress pretty or ugly: they will then see none but those worth their looking at, and talk to none but those that can understand them. An odd circumstance would now and then happen among them, as one of them might die: but as this would be of small importance, as they could easily know all the circumstances of it (for their ignorance in those points is all that makes the bustle about it among those people); I say, as these might easily be known, they would only then send somebody out with this useless person, and get a living member in his or her room. The estate of the deceased should go towards the public fund for the relief of Time, and be appropriated to the master of the diversions, and to the *maitre general*

d'hotel, according to the season of the year: if in winter, it might be placed to the eating account, for green pease and peaches, &c. the new inhabitant being also to join stock for all the common uses above mentioned. How far this in the end may answer toward making them happy, I will not pretend to say; and as happiness is not a thing they trouble themselves about, it does not at all become me to concern myself for them. The vulgar part of mankind, who believe there is such a thing, and who wish to enjoy it, will take care to procure it by the common, plain, simple methods prescribed by good sense, and procured by moderation.

E S S A Y XXI.

I RECEIVED a letter from a friend of mine the other day, telling me he had been very much puzzled, by a set of gentlemen who dined at his house lately, on a subject of high concern; who

who contended that the free-agency of man was incompatible with the foreknowledge of God. My friend says, tho' he had never before doubted of either, yet not having considered them jointly, he was not prepared to answer the arguments they used. He has therefore paid me the compliment to desire I would send him my thoughts on the subject; withal very handsomely saying, that tho' not being able to answer the arguments brought by these ingenious gentlemen, had not at all convinced him that they were therefore unanswerable. A person, as he observes, may not have considered an opinion; but it does not in consequence follow, that the not being immediately capable of viewing it in all its parts, is a reason in to it, for coming and believing it established past contradiction.

Though this is a subject rather too serious for the lightness of an essay, yet I hope I may be excused treating of it in the manner I answered my friend, without offence to those who are more properly qualified to discuss it in a logical or scientific manner.

In the first place, the argument must fall to the ground, if we consider how very undeniable the two articles are, upon which they found their objection, if we take them separately. Whoever, but for a moment, thinks of the nature which must necessarily belong to God, must know, that fore-

knowledge or prescience is one of the attributes connected invariably with the very idea of a perfect being. He must be just as equal to look forward to all eternity, as to look back to all that is past. The knowledge of the past and future must be inseparable from his nature, and necessary to his government of the world; and, indeed, is an attribute so generally believed to belong to God, that it need not to be insisted upon. The other article, our own free-agency, I wonder the pride of man will ever suffer him for a moment to doubt; but, as even that will be given up for the sake of cavil, let any man but consider himself and his actions unconnected with the opinion in question, and he will find a thousand instances crowd into his mind, to prove he has an agency of his own. — But give me leave to bring one argument: Every other creature that we have any knowledge of, can be minutely described. Those persons whom we call naturalists, can tell us, with the greatest exactness, the habits and customs of every different animal: their food, their nests, their way of living, and every article concerning them is invariably the same; so that we may be certain, by these circumstances, of what species they are: and we know also, that what they did last year, they will do the next; and, were they to live a thousand years, the smallest circumstance relating

lating to them, would never vary. Who can say this of man?—ever unlike himself, inconstant in his manners, his customs, his food, his raiment, and his religion too. Some of the savages, perhaps, may seem to contradict this, and to be like the animals, regular, and constant. But is this owing to an uniformity in themselves? No, surely; but to that want of intercourse with other nations, which gives them no opportunity to adopt new modes: for we see, wherever commerce and freedom is carried, there they soon learn to change, and in many instances become very different from what we found them. To what then is this to be attributed, but to the freedom of thought and action which is the glory of man. Are not our very vices proofs of our freedom? for, surely, if the great Being, who is in himself all perfection, and must therefore love it, had made us mere engines, he would have made us perfect ones, not blown about by every blast, inconstant, unstable, never to be described. Were we children of instinct, and not of freedom, what occasion was there for our passions; or, rather, are not our passions proofs of our free-agency? Do we not say and do to-day what we wish unsaid to-morrow? Nay, do we not by our opposite actions shew our inconstancy? and inconstancy and instinct can never go together. But this doctrine of free-agency is so self-

evident, that it is a kind of insult upon our understandings seriously to prove it; but a still greater insult upon them to try to disprove it. Every man in his own breast feels a freedom of thought and will, that contradicts and shrinks back from the idea of compulsion.

If perfection then is allowed to belong to God (and the very idea of God carries perfection with it), the attribute of prescience most incontestably belong to perfection, and in consequence to God. If variety and an uncertainty of character belong to man (and that it does every day's experience must convince us), then man is a free agent, independent in his actions, and liable to the capriciousness of his own will. These two points being established, it of course follows, that they do exist together. That God's foreknowledge and man's free-agency are alike certain, and are now in full force together. When once it is known that a thing *is*, all the seeming contradiction in the world cannot prove it *is not*. The inexplicableness is in our own confined ideas, not in the thing itself. This I say with regard to doctrines or facts in general : with regard to this before us, there does not appear to be the least difficulty or contradiction in it, nor does the proof of one disprove the other. Having considered them separately, give me leave to take them together, and

to bring a proof of their possibly existing together from our own poor powers. In some small, confined degree, we may be said to foresee. We do from causes and effects frequently draw conclusions, that such and such events will be; that such a person will do such a thing, or go to such a place: does it necessarily follow, that we have it in our power to prevent these events; or, if we had it in our power, must we of necessity exert it, either to forward the action or event, or to hinder it? Surely not. Could we foresee every event that was to take place from this time to our death, in the family of any one we are acquainted with, does it follow that that family has not free power to act? In the same manner we may argue with regard to the Supreme Being towards man: he sees beforehand how much a man will act: by the attribute of looking into futurity, he knows what every man will do. This is not an exertion of his power, but of his mind, if I may so speak; he leaves man to act as he will, but he can foresee how that will be. 'Tis by this, indeed, he governs the world; for knowing how men will act, he guides the consequences of their actions, and is prepared (to speak in the language of man) beforehand for every event: so that, in the various revolutions of the world, he may finally bring all things to the point he has ordained. Man, with

regard to his own particular, acts as he will ; but with regard to the government of the world in general, it is in the hands of Him who alone can manage, because he alone can follow, man in all his various windings and turnings, and foresee what his capricious mind will do.

Perhaps it may be thought, that, in saying this, I argue against a particular Providence, which has been a point too much debated :—it is very foreign to my present subject, and does not in the least interfere with it ; for if it please God to turn particular events to good that seemed inevitably bad, it is no argument against that general government I spoke of above, nor does it make against man's freedom of action ; because the great Ruler of the World can turn the event of his actions to the contrary of what he intended.

In what degree, or how far it pleases our Creator to interfere, and whether more or less, according to man's deserts, are matters of no consequence to us to know. As long as the great fundamental doctrines of God's being, and our own, are established, it can be of little service to us to know more ; unless, indeed, we add the knowledge of that conduct to which it becomes us all to adhere, as suitable to that dignity of character which we are called upon to support, in consequence of our dependence upon ourselves ; I mean,
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in consequence of the being free to act either well or ill. How can we answer it to ourselves, to take up with an inferior character, when we have it in our power to preserve one which will be our happiness, our honour, and our glory, and which will continue and increase these three great objects, throughout this life and the next.

What can be more suitable to the idea we have of God, what more congenial to our own feelings, than to acknowledge our own freedom of will to act as we please; but to acknowledge, also, that God foresees how we shall act, so as to plan out his own universal government, and in the end bring all things to his own glory?

ESSAY XXII.

SITTING the other evening after supper in my great elbow chair by the fire-side, and being much fatigued with the varieties of the past day, I fell into a profound sleep, and had the following

lowing odd and particular dream, the inconsistencies of which are what must always be expected, when the imagination is at work without reason to controul it, or outward objects to divert the mind from its pursuits.—Methought I was walking in a very composed manner, through a most delightful wood, where the close of the evening had stilled every warbler, and no sound was heard, but now and then a parting note, which only made the profoundness of the silence appear more striking. But as I advanced towards the end of the wood, this silence was soon exchanged for a confused and prodigious noise; and I found, on my coming out of it, an innumerable concourse of men, women, and children, on a very spacious plain, all running about as if in great haste and confusion, and as if each thought of no one but himself, sometimes flinging down those that stood in their way, but never taking any notice of so ill-natured an action. I was some time before I could discover what they were all about. They appeared to me, by the numbers, to be the whole race of mankind: I heard, every now and then, the short sentences of “There she is!” “I see her at a distance!” “Such a one has got her!” and the like. Having gained a little rising, I soon spied, *some way* from this great crowd, a most lovely and beautiful woman, in a long white robe,
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the train of which was supported by a young nymph, more gaily dressed. I soon found by her composed and engaging countenance, that her name was *Happiness*, and her attendant's *Pleasure*. I stood still to view this amazing sight, and was surprized to find that some were running quite from her, and yet crying out they had just got at her. None were yet come up to her; so that those I heard say that others *had* done so, I found were only deceived by the distance, and, following the same line they were in, thought their *leader* had reached her, and were soon surprized to sink themselves in a path quite wide of that which led to her. Some courted *Pleasure* only, and often tried to separate her from *Happiness*; but she remained unmoved, and assured them they must be first acquainted with her mistress, before they could enjoy her company. *Happiness* had several attendants whom she sent out to guide those to her who were inclined to follow them. Religion, Virtue, and Reason, were those guides, and whoever followed them came directly into the straight road that led to her. But all on a sudden, I heard almost the whole multitude cry out "I have her!" "I have her!" I looked immediately, and saw at least ten young women, dressed exactly as *Pleasure* had been, who attended on *Happiness*, only still more gaily. Their appearance struck me, as they were
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all very beautiful. They had immediately a whole train of admirers, every one eagerly pursuing that they had fixed on, and I found all of them thought she would lead them to *Happiness*. One held up a purse of gold; another, a bottle of wine; another, a crown; a fourth, a fine-made racehorse; a fifth, the picture of a courtesan; the sixth, a fine equipage and gay liveries; the seventh, diamonds, flowers, and all sorts of ornaments; and the eighth, a play and an opera bill, and tickets for balls and assemblies; and others with all these things in miniature for children, and so on; each shewing with great eagerness their several inducements. The crowd they soon divided between them. I turned my eyes again toward *Happiness*, and found her quite alone, deserted, as I thought, even by *Pleasure*, who seemed to have assumed all these different shapes, which, when any came near enough to catch at, they eagerly put out their hand; but I was surprized to find they *continued* looking for her, when I and they too thought they had her in their arms. But, after a short surprize and vexation in their countenances, they turned about, and began as eager a pursuit after one of the other enchantresses, where they always met with the same disappointment. However, some few, after one disappointment, looked *eagerly* after the true *Happiness*, and they were

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immediately accosted by some of her attendants, who conducted them into one of the roads that led directly to her. The true and first damsel Pleasure met them on the way, and soon made their journey, easy and delightful to them; but how were they astonished, when they came almost to the place where Happiness was seated, to find they must pass through a gate, *before* which too there was a dangerous bridge: but, however, those who advanced near enough to see her in full lustre, were not at all dismayed, but went over the bridge with serenity and firmness, though the water under it cast up a thick humidity, which caused a cold sweat to overspread their bodies while they passed; but, having prayed for assistance in that cold passage, and guides being sent, the gates were thrown wide open, and they were received with soft music and hymns, setting forth theirs and others praises; and they were surprized to find several of their friends there, whom they had formerly left, as thinking them gone quite into a wrong and *melancholy* path.

I was just rejoicing at their arrival at and enjoyment of Happiness, when the dismal groans of at least a hundred poor wretches called off my attention. I soon perceived they had all been led by their different mistresses to the brink of a pit, where she left them without help, upbraiding
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them with their folly ; and they fell down together into this bottomless pit, lamenting their mistaken pursuit, and finding, that, had they listened to Reason or Religion in time, they should have attained their end. Their reiterated pains and miseries waked me, pleased to find, that, though I had not gone through the gate to Happiness, it was yet in my power to get into the path that leads to it.

ESSAY XXI.

I HOPE my readers will excuse my obtruding on them a little serious advice with regard to the usefulness of the great art of œconomy of time. Precious as time is, nothing is more squandered away, nothing which we waste so much of, not even our money, which in this extravagant age I am sensible is thrown away in the most trifling manner. I was much struck the other day with seeing a coachman on his box pull out a book from his pocket as soon as his master was set down at his visit, and begin reading

reading it very attentively. Whatever were his studies, he lost no time in them ; and I must confess I thought his example worthy imitation. I do not here mean to recommend a dry, formal, methodical way of spending our time ; but in general to make such use of every part of it, that we may live as long as we can ; for how very short would some people's lives be, if we were to deduct all the blanks from them which idleness has made, and how much longer would they appear than they really are, if we could fill those hours up with some useful employment ! How different would our lives appear on a review of them, were it our wish to make them as valuable to others, and beneficial to ourselves, as might be ! The shortest life would then appear long, when every day could be distinctly distinguished and recollected ; or at least, when, altogether, so much had been done by us, that nothing but a constant œconomy of our time could have enabled us to get through such a variety of agreeable as well as useful employments. We should look upon our time as a small field, to which we are confined for a certain, or, I should rather say, an uncertain time. In this our field, which has been given us by our best friend, we should take care to cultivate every thing that the ground is capable of producing ; every spot should be sown with the seed suitable to its soil. Our spade should
be

be continually going; we should dig for new treasures, find out new sources of improvement, and, when found, should labour to bring them to perfection; we should hough down every weed, not suffering it to take root. These will keep us employed a great part of every day, and where the soil is most fertile, there will most cause be for our hough. Here we should sow nothing but good seed, nothing but what will be sure soon to yield us a rich increase. We should vary our work also with the seasons: in our Spring, be putting in our crops, and our plants; in our Summer, weeding and pruning them; in our Autumn, reaping, and receiving the produce and fruit of our labour; and in our Winter, endeavouring to keep alive whatever we have found most valuable, and reflecting with pleasure on all our labours.

In this our little field of time we may have a part of it for our pleasure ground too. Here we should enter with caution, always taking care to keep that walk smooth which leads back again to our more necessary and useful works, that, while we indulge ourselves with a little relaxation in it, we may never lose sight of, or a relish for returning to, the other parts of our field again. And even to this our pleasure ground we should carry our implements, and keep it free from every noxious weed, filling it only with those delightful fruits
and

and flowers, which, when dead, give us no disagreeable sensations.

One piece of advice more let me add, and that is, so to dispose our ground, that it may afford us an agreeable prospect into that beautiful country which our friend will one day or other remove us to, and there present us with an estate suitable to the improvements we have made in the small tract now lent to us.

I have now done with my little allegory; let me then be permitted to add, that this is the season of recollection: we are just entering on a new portion of time; suppose we were just to stop a little, and take a review of the years that are past. Let us ask ourselves what satisfaction they have brought us? what that was which has yielded us any? on what foundation it brought us any? and whether it will always give us the same? These questions fairly put, and candidly answered, we shall be able to form schemes for our future satisfaction, either by pursuing our old methods, or adopting new ones; above all remembering that no day need pass without yielding us some self-satisfaction, and affording us some agreeable reflections. This would be indeed to have the art of œconomy in time; and idleness, that king of mischief, that preventer of innumerable pleasures to ourselves and others, would be for ever banished into exile. A little

recollection at night on the employments of the past day, and a little forecast in the morning towards those of the ensuing one, would save many a sorrowful reflection, and give many a joyful one. Let, then, the approaching year be entered on with œconomy; and let us remember,

The Spirit walks of every day deceas'd,
And smiles an Angel, or a Fury frowns.

Young.

ESSAY XXIV.

I DON'T know any thing that contributes more to our amusement and good humour in our country neighbourhoods than those vehicles of intelligence the newspapers: they are a constant fund of conversation and animadversion; whether true or false, all is swallowed and easily digested. Among other things, your schemers are always sure to have either opposers or abettors. Some of these papers have given us a proposition
for

for one, two, or more men to be taken out of every parish, instead of the horrible mode of pressing. I think it a good scheme. However, that is not my present business to determine; but I could not help diverting myself with thinking, as I sat by my fire side, how such an order would be received in my own parish; how they would flock to me with their various petitions: I say to me; for, being a Justice of Peace, I imagine I should be to determine their fates. Some good dames would come with tears imploring mercy for their good man, and assuring me they must all starve without him; others again, no doubt, would be ready enough to think they could do without him, and that he might as well work at the oars as for them, for they never saw six-pence of his money. These thoughts diverted me till I went to bed; and though they did not lie very heavy on my mind, they followed me there, and afforded me much more amusement in my sleeping than my waking imaginations. I was insolent enough to mount a step higher, and take in all ranks of people. I thought I was still in my elbow chair, when I received an order from government to select out of my parish ten able men, without respect to rank, who should be deemed useless to their families, and might be serviceable to the nation. Being much puzzled how to get at the

truth of the first part of the order, a friend of mine, methought, proposed the following scheme, which I put in execution. I caused hand-bills to be dispersed, desiring all the *ladies* and *women* in the parish, who had useless or disorderly husbands, to send me a memorial of the same, setting forth the particular grievance; and also desiring they would appear before me, and bring witnesses to prove the truth of what they alleged. I also ordered, that all such husbands should appear likewise, and offer any thing they might have to say in their own defence. My parish being well stocked with the better sort, I gave them the hearing first; and methought there appeared before me more than sufficient out of every rank to answer the demands of government. I collected a sufficient number of constables to keep them all in order, so that I might hear each cause distinctly.

The first memorial I received was from rather an elderly lady, setting forth that Lord —, her husband, was of so insipid a turn of mind, that she had long wished for an occasion to part; that he would neither play at cards, nor read her a novel; that he was always employed in what he called useful employments, which, though indeed they did not directly interfere with her, yet rendered him as to her quite useless; and therefore she
humbly

humbly prayed he might be sent to be useful to his country, for which he always expressed such a regard. Her Ladyship's waiting maids, another lady, and a young officer, witnessed for the truth of what she here alleged. I then desired my Lord to offer his defence. He said he begged to make none; for that serving his country would ever be his greatest pleasure next to conversing with his wife; but since he had long been without that pleasure, he desired to back the memorial. A general murmur ran through the whole assembly. When I demanded the reason, a principal farmer of the parish advanced, and begged leave, in the name of the whole country, to intercede that this noble Lord might continue a blessing and an ornament to it. There is not, says he, one here present that does not sensibly feel the happy effects of that noble Lord's example and beneficence; he has improved our lands, increased our manufactures, relieved our poor, and is beloved by all. A universal shout was now heard, and I immediately dismissed the *culprit*, exhorting the Lady not to insist on her being unhappy, but to give the noble Lord leave to do this general good, and hoped she would soon share in the applause. I also *whispered* my Lord, next time my Lady desired he would read a novel, to comply, if they were alone.

The next memorial was presented by a young lady, who seemed too young to have faults herself, or to see them in others. She set forth, that, since she had been married, which was near a month, she had found herself not near so happy as she expected: that, as she knew but little of the gentleman beforehand, having seen him but a week, she thought she should enjoy all the pleasures of courtship, usually antecedent to marriage, afterwards, and that she should find all the good qualities she expected, and thought he possessed more than answered on further acquaintance; but she was deceived; he seemed to want only her purse, and that she believed he was as indifferent to her, as she was to him, and therefore humbly prayed, &c. This being a nice case, and the lady seeming to have little more to add, and no witnesses to produce, I ordered him next to appear; but he declined it, and only sent by his steward to say, that, if his Lady's money held out to pay his previous debts, he had rather stay at home, and would endeavour then to begin to love his lady: I therefore advised the lady to wait patiently for that time; and ventured to foretel, that, with her attracting person and prudent carriage, she might make her husband her lover; and desired the steward to tell the gentleman, the lady's having delivered her fortune into his hands, was no good reason

reason why he should not be happy in her charms.

The next that appeared was a tradesman's wife, who came forward and presented her petition herself, and assured me it was every word of it true. She set forth, that her husband was most extremely cruel to her, and used her worse than he did his dogs: that he spent his whole time, and the money he got by his trade, entirely in increasing his stock, or in some other way as little to her advantage: that, as for her, he would not allow her one sixpence, either to dress her or her daughter as became their *rank*: he often told them, that washing or stuff gowns suited them best, and that it was best not to spend more than they could afford. In short, the grievances they laboured under were truly deplorable; and they therefore prayed he might be sent on board. The daughter appeared dressed in a clean, fine linen gown, and witnessed to the truth of what her mother had said.

The tradesman then appeared, and with the most earnest entreaties begged not to be sent away. His modest air, his neat appearance, gave weight to the following allegations: that he had many children, who would be undone, if he was to leave them; that some he had 'prenticed out with the little money he had saved, but that he

had still more unprovided for; and that, though his wife and eldest daughter often wished him to spend more on them, he did not think it his duty to regard them, as he thought the other part of his family called for an equal share of his fortune. I applauded his conduct in the warmest expressions, and told the *ladies*, I thought they had better be contented with those things they at present wore, as it might chance, if I sent the good man away, they might have none at all. They both gave a toss, and flounced out of court.

The next petition was brought by a middle-aged lady, whose appearance spoke in her favour, and I was preparing to send her good man away directly, when I cast my eye on her petition, and found the words may *not* be sent away. I read it, and I found it set forth more real grievances than any one yet presented. It said that she had lived twenty years with her good man, and that he would long ago have been ruined but for her utmost care to prevent it: that he was given to gaming, and therefore, if he should meet with temptations on ship-board, he would be quite ruined; the only way to prevent it was to make home as agreeable to him as possible: that he was also given to drinking, and came home at times so intoxicated, as to almost endanger her life: that, if this inclination should increase, he

would

would be undone, and might never get the better of it, and might likewise die of it: that, moreover, she presented this petition, because she heard several of the neighbours intended to sign one desiring he might be sent on board, as he was a troublesome member of society. Her petition, her amiable appearance, charmed me and all who saw and heard her; but I was cast into such a dilemma how to act, whether to increase her quiet or fears, that I awaked.—If my sleepy thoughts are any amusement to my readers, I shall think my dream fully answered.

ESSAY XXV.

I GIVE my readers the under-written in the simplicity of style in which I received it, imagining it would not be of the less service to the world.

“ Dear Brother,

“ IT is with great concern I see (and I cannot but see) the daily fall of virtue in the world. The living a great deal in it, makes me the more
sensible

sensible of it. Perhaps, in your part of it, Virtue and Vice have much the same share they had a hundred years ago ; but, I am sorry to say, there cannot be a doubt that is not the case here. I know not whether it be not properer to say there is less virtue, than that there is more vice ; for of the latter there was always much of every kind : but then it was mixed with some bright examples of virtue, that shone out with the greater lustre for the blackness and deformity that surrounded it, like the glow-worm in a dark night. But now you do not hear of any that either exert themselves in the cause of religion, or are by their life a recommendation of it, and a silent reproof to the profane and vicious. But the sin I would chiefly mean, and am the most shocked at (and cannot help warning you against, as that which prevails equally in the country as the town), is the profanation of the holy word of God. We cannot now converse with any one that does not, upon every occasion, by way of wit, or to fill up vacancies in their discourse, bring in sentences of the awful word of God. And (to the shame of the age be it spoken) there is scarce a pamphlet or paper that comes out, but is stained with this crime ; which goes down with the less reluctance, even by some otherwise conscientious people, because it was well brought in : and, “ upon my word,

word, the fellow writes well," is generally the commendation of a man that has dared to fly in the face of Heaven, to take its sacred words, and defile them with his own. But, alas! how will the men that speak or write them on any other than solemn occasions, endure to hear the divine author speaking them himself, and requiring an account of those talents of speech and writing which have been entrusted to them. I grow warm, my dear brother, whilst I write of them, as I do when I hear or read them.

“ The plain causes of this melancholy growing evil are, I take it, chiefly these three; either from never reading or hearing the scripture at all, or the not doing so with a sense of their divine original; or a third is from the shameful and unbecoming manner in which they are read by most of the clergymen both in town and country, who, some out of a fatal disregard of them themselves, some from carelessness, habit, or want of consideration, read them in such a manner as cannot excite reverence or attention in any of their hearers, except those few who beforehand are possessed with the fear of God, and an awe for his word: while, on the contrary, I am persuaded, were they read with such seriousness, solemnity, and devotion, as shewed the reader of them to be earnest in what he was about, and to feel the weighty

weighty truth himself, they would (I think they must) press on the minds of their hearers, and the voice of the Almighty would sink down into their hearts and ears, though ever so unprepared for them. This would remedy one cause of this sin, and be a great means of preventing it. And what a shame is it, that the very ministers of that word should themselves lead people to the profanation of it? But would people take a little time to consider whom they are going to hear or read, even the Author of their being, who gave that treasury of divine knowledge by which they might stand or fall; I say, would they think this with themselves, the manner of their being read would be of little or no consequence. As to that other and most shameful cause of this sin, I have nothing bad enough to say of it; I mean, the never hearing or reading them at all. It is a common, though unpardonable custom; and we cannot wonder (though we must lament) that those broken sentences they have remembered from their youth, or hear now from others, are brought in by them without reluctance on all occasions, to the dishonour of their God, their own confusion, and the disgust of those good people who happen to be in their company, or to read their otherwise perhaps well-penned and entertaining writings. This neglect of the word of God naturally leads

men

men to a contempt of his laws; it loosens the ties of reason and duty, which gives freedom to unruly passions of every kind, as both are necessary to help us to govern them. Would any that but for a moment considered, that it has pleased his Creator to declare his will to him, for his comfort in this world of ignorance, that he might know how to escape his wrath, and obtain his favour, live in a total disregard of that his goodness? Much less would he dare to take any part of his awful words, and make them the jest and scorn of others, or his own? How unbecoming a rational creature is such a behaviour? With what anger must the Almighty look down on those who thus abuse his mercies, turn his sacred words to ridicule, and, on the most trifling occasions, profane them, and dare his vengeance to pour its wrath on their heads? I wish all would consider before they go to hear the word of God, or when they take it in their hands to read it, that he with whose finger it was wrote, is at that instant looking down on them, and observing the manner in which they receive his words, approving or condemning them and what they are reading. Heard and read with this thought, they must have a great influence on their lives; and how happy, how beautiful must that life be, that is governed by the rules of a perfect Being! How comfortable must they feel, who
are

are guided by an unerring director, whose only view in revealing his will was the happiness of man, who without it would have been a wretched, blind, ignorant creature ! How can we be thankful enough for his goodness, thus, by the most pleasant ways and paths of peace, to lead us to the most perfect bliss, unutterable, inexhaustible, and eternal ! The blessed Lord avert from this nation the evil the abuse of his mercy deserves ! and that, not by suffering with our audacious affronts to his holy word, but by turning the hearts of the profane to consider their ways and words ; by awakening the careless to avoid the snare laid for them to condemn the sacred oracles ; by making all those, who have a sense of their original, exert themselves in the cause of the religion they teach ; by making the ministers of them read and preach them in such a manner as is most likely to work on the hearts of their hearers, even in that plain, easy, and earnest way, by which the divine Author of them may be seen, that shines in every line with proof irresistible ; and by thus leading all to confess he is to be adored and obeyed, who has wrought such wonderful works for the children of men. You will, I know, excuse the freedom with which I send you my thoughts, on a subject which I was led to reflect more seriously upon, by the frequent occasions that I have lately had to lament so sad a crime. Yours, &c."

Pall-Mall.

ESSAY

E S S A Y XXVI.

TH E degeneracy of the age is the general topic of conversation among the serious and thinking part of the world: whether it be really worse than the preceding ones, I shall not make it my business to enquire; I only wish that the declaimers against the present would find out some means of making it better; but I fear that there being no good pen among us to undertake such a work, is but too good a proof of what they allege. I have often wished a revival of such periodical papers as the town was formerly entertained with; but I never wished more heartily for an Addison or a Steele than at this time, when there are certain enormities stealing into practice; some of which are of too trifling a nature, at first, to give subject for a volume, and others of too serious a one, for those guilty of them to read or hear any thing against them in a grave discourse upon the subject. Such little tracts as the Spectators, Worlds, Guardians, &c. were part of their daily amusement; and a man was sometimes surpris'd into serious reflection, or into acknowledging the beauty of virtue, under the mask of amusement.

Of

Of all the follies (I had almost said vices) of the present age, none seems to want reproofs of this nature more than the hasty marriages so much in vogue among us. Nothing would afford more ample subject for ridicule, or open a wider field for the pen of a good writer; but since those are scarce, give me leave to say a word or two on the subject.

The happiness of mankind in every particular, both in high and low, seems much to depend on a right choice of the person who is to be our companion for life; and, I believe, if rightly considered, most of the misfortunes that befall us proceed from carelessness in that affair. But to leave those of lower rank to go on as they do at present, let me speak a word or two to those in high life, who have set the example of thus becoming a master, a husband, and a father, before they know whether the person they have chose is fit for a wife, a mistress, or a mother. One pretty feature, or one pretty saying, is sufficient to make a man a lover; and a lady is all charming in person, or her mind all *sentiment* and *sensibility*, though, for any thing he knows, she may have neither the one nor the other. I am aware that a man is hardly let to speak often to a lady, but he is obliged to *declare himself*. Now, though this is another absurdity of the age, yet is a man to sacrifice his happiness
to

to avoid the curiosity of others? No man, I think, can too carefully avoid any particularities of words or actions that can give *just* occasions for these enquiries from the lady or her friends. I am aware also, that a cautious manner of proceeding may subject a man to the laugh of his acquaintance; but, I think, he had better let others laugh at him than laugh at himself, which he will scarcely fail to do, for his folly in thinking outward appearances were sufficient to make him happy: but when he has secured his being so, by precaution, he may enjoy his laugh at them in return, and become the object of their envy rather than their scorn. A friend of mine once asked me what I thought of the lady he pitched upon for his wife; upon which I returned the question, and asked what *he* thought of her? Why truly, Jack, says he, I never thought much about her, but I think she has a very pretty face. And do you think, says I, that a face will make you a happy man; or that it will even appear to be a pretty face, if the lady should chance to have no *other* qualification to recommend her? If you were going to hire a house-maid, or a cook, would you not wish to know if they were qualified for their office, and would be glad they were of tolerable tempers, and to have their honesty and sobriety ensured to you as much as possible beforehand? And

will you take a wife with less caution than your servants, whom you may part with as soon as you please, if they prove unsuitable? But her whom you take to the most intimate connection, who is to be your companion for life, you fix upon without the least enquiry or knowledge, either about her temper or turn of disposition—she too, who is to share with you in all your joys and griefs; nay, who will be perhaps the principal cause of either the one or the other. My friend heard me out, and did me the honour, and himself the service, to take my advice; for, upon enquiry, this charmer proved to be no way worthy of or suitable to him. He ever after that was more cautious in his vows, and several times narrowly escaped scorching himself with Hymen's torch: but having once more fallen a sacrifice to Cupid, he still stuck to my advice, and every thing answering to his wishes, he is now secure in the affections of the best and most beautiful of her sex.—Marrying in haste is generally (at least may be for any thing we know) the forerunner of repenting at leisure.

I do not mean that every man should be a year or two fixing upon his fair one; but, surely, 'tis every one's interest, as soon as his fancy is hit, to find out, by every means he can, whether she is suitable in other respects, and whether he may hope for an agreeable companion in her twenty
years

years hence, and be then as unwilling to part with her as he is anxious now to obtain her. Thinking, I am sensible, is not the characteristic of the present age ; nor does thought so soon overtake them in any state at it used to do ; but still, could a man only think one moment that he must think one time or other, he would find he had better do it before he is called to it by the miseries brought upon him by his own foolish choice. 'Tis easy to avoid an evil, but it is not so easy to extricate ourselves out of one.—Though it is not quite apt to my present subject, yet I cannot avoid mentioning one, that is, the indulgence young men now a-days allow themselves in admiring those to whom they can have no pretensions : the slightest thing is enough to excite their attention ; and while they are falling a sacrifice to what is so contrary to every principle in man, they leave merit and beauty (perhaps far superior) unregarded, where they might indulge themselves not only honourably, but happily.

*Let those who ev'ry fair admire,
Fix where virtue fans the fire.*

E S S A Y XXVII.

HAVING found, among some family papers, the following letter, and thinking it contained some useful advice, I have transcribed it among my own writings.

“HEARING by chance that my dear niece wished for my opinion on a certain point, but had not confidence to ask it, I take *this* method of giving it to you, that you may more thoroughly consider wherein you agree, and wherein you differ. I only expect this one thing, that you give me your thoughts as freely in return, and that for the future there may be no distance between us, but that we converse as *friends*, and deliver our opinions to each other as freely as if our ages were the same. I am sensible, my dear niece, that it was a delicacy in you in not caring to begin upon a subject that is different from any that we have yet talked upon: I admire you for it, and would not have you part with that natural modesty for all the easy forwardness so much in fashion among the young ladies of the present age. *Modesty* is beauty’s

beauty's brightest charm : whoever has *that*, will be sure of admirers, whether she has beauty or not ; but those that have none, are disgusting even with the largest share. Thus much I thought proper to say, that you may not think it necessary to part with that delicacy, in order to be pleasing to the other sex. However they may seem to be pleased with the company of forward girls, there is not one who would chuse a wife from among them ; at least, no man would, that any sensible woman would chuse for a husband. I am insensibly come upon the point that is to be the subject of this letter, and shall therefore make no other preamble, but immediately give you my thoughts of marriage in general. I look upon matrimony as a matter of indifference ; I do not mean *how* it is performed, but *whether*. Most people have it in their power to live without it ; I mean as to circumstances : the rich have money sufficient, and the trades-people are in a way that with industry they can procure a competency. There are some cases where it is certainly desirable in itself. Ill usage is a very excusable reason for running into it, as long as we take care we do not verify the old English saying, *Out of the frying-pan into the fire*.—But I intend speaking of marriage only where people's minds are free and at liberty to debate on the several arguments

pro and *con*. I called it a matter of *indifference*, because I think any thing is *so*, that does not directly or indirectly belong to our one great point in this life, which is the fitting ourselves for that where we are always to live. That affair we can equally take care of in all situations of life; provided we think with Mary, we may act with Martha. This affair, then, which most young people think the greatest of their lives, (as in some respect it is,) I think an act that ought to be looked upon as not at all material whether it happen or not. If it does not, (and I think the chance against us, as there are more women than men,) we shall, by acquiring that indifference about it which I have recommended to you, take off from that acrimony which is so very observable in most Old Maids, as if that being so they thought their business in this world had not been accomplished, and that fortune had been spiteful to them; which they think it excusable in them to revenge, by being bitter towards all those that are not in their state. And this way of thinking will also take off the edge of any disappointment that may happen to you, as, when you had no pleasure in the mere being married, you will be reconciled to remain in the situation you are in with ease and satisfaction, and have only then to get the better of those little uneasinesses of heart

heart which must be the necessary consequence of being disappointed of the confidence and affection of one (we thought at least) deserving of ours. Much may be done to guard against being hurt by disappointments of this kind; and I would advise you, my dear niece, always to be upon your guard, not so much against the insincerity as the inconstancy of the men, or rather, I would say, that *irresolution* which prevents even a sincere lover from determining on the point itself. The only time, then, dear Harriot, to consider about marriage, is when a person makes his addresses; I do not mean in form; but wishes to convey to you that he esteems and loves you: then it is you must guard yourself at all points. The first thing to be considered is the character of your admirer. If his character be any way suspicious, inform yourself of the truth, and never be too hasty in your determination: his address may deceive you; he may be either better or worse than he at first appears. This mistake *your own* good judgment will soon find out: so I would advise you to rely more on *that* than on any one thing else; and by that means you will acquire a habit of being *impartial* in your judgment, since you will have *yourself only* to condemn, if you judge amiss. If the gentleman prove not what you would wish, and either his temper or his principles be such as

you think will make you not chuse him for a companion all your life, reject his suit at once, not with contempt, but indifference; and plainly shew him you are as well pleased with any other man's or woman's company. If he pursues you, and comes to the point, reject his offers without hesitation: if his principles are your objection, do not scruple with civility to tell him so; if his temper, particularities, or such like, be your objection, decline his offer without giving any reason, and keep up the acquaintance or not, as is most agreeable to him. If a person becomes your admirer, whose good sense, good temper, and good principles, merit your esteem, then, my dear Harriot, guard yourself carefully against too soon believing that every thing will follow his good opinion of you. Many are the reasons which may induce him to like your company, without intending always to be in it. He may have even some thoughts towards it; but so wavering are even the best men (and perhaps the best men are most so) in this particular, that, unless they conclude the matter suddenly, they very often don't conclude it at all. They are very blameable in this respect, when they are certain of the ladies character whom they like. I hope my dear niece may never meet with this, but I am only willing to guard you at all points, and especially the only

one

one wherein, *you* will, I dare say, be in any danger; for I know your goodness of heart too well to think a bad man will ever find admittance to your affections; but the same goodness of heart may make you think that none but bad men would use any woman so ill as to gain her affections, and then not continue his to her. But a thousand reasons may prevent the accomplishment of what perhaps he much wishes; friends, circumstances, time, may all conspire, or one may be sufficient, to prevent it: and 'tis also possible he may, in the midst of his attachment, meet with somebody that he is still more charmed with, and with a little help from other people he may be turned away from you. When any one is thus aware of all the hinderances that may possibly happen to an event that seems desirable, it is with great composure they can submit to the disappointment, if it should come upon them. I call it a disappointment, for I am not intending to stretch human nature further than it will go; for where we have hopes of any good to ourselves, their being taken from us must be uncomfortable: I only am very certain, the degree of disappointment may be greater or less, as we please. If you was to set your heart entirely on any one thing in particular, suffer your mind to dwell continually upon it, and persuade yourself that nothing was
likely

likely to, or could, prevent its accomplishment, then the blow must fall with great force, that breaks those pleasing hopes, and blasts all your future schemes and prospects: but when you have from the first doubted of success, expected a change, and every little thing has caused suspicions to arise within you; when you have thought on all other things as constantly and as much as if this event was not wavering before you; then the disappointment slightly hits you, you feel a consciousness of having been in the right to doubt, and you endeavour with better success to drive the pleasing prospects from your thoughts, and turn them on any other subject. This way of conducting yourself you will also find the most effectual way of guarding your *heart* from being too hastily drawn away by the object of your esteem and regard. I would never advise you, on any account, to suffer that to slip out of your own keeping, till you are sure you have got one in return; I mean, returned in such a manner, as at the same time to be in possession of the hand too, or at least in a certainty of being so. Nothing can exceed the folly of what we see daily instances of, of suffering love to creep into the heart, before it is returned by the object beloved. This is a thing I hope I need not guard my dear niece against, whose diffidence of her own merit would
never

never permit her to give her heart, and expect an exchange afterwards. But then is the time of trial to a woman, when a gentleman she is pleased with becomes her admirer, and seems to speak the language of a sincere lover in his actions, his looks, and his words. It will, I dare say, be pretended by some that 'tis then impossible any longer to hold out, and that love ought to be the return for love. I grant that confidence, openness, an endeavour to please, and every thing to encrease the growing flame, is very allowable, nay right; but it is very possible to do all this, and yet guard against being too deeply involved in the fetters of love one's self. If our admirer prove sincere, then our joy will be doubled, and we may give way with pleasure to the pleasing satisfaction, conscious that we stayed till security gave a sanction to our love, and that we did not place our affections on a wrong object. Thus much I thought it prudent to say with regard to the manner in which you ought to keep your own heart. As to your behaviour towards men in general, I need not tell you, who are rather apt to be too diffident, that some degree of reserve is proper; at the same time I would by no means have it appear that you are so after you are become acquainted: and, indeed, at all times I would recommend an easy behaviour, as least distinguishable from the
rest

rest of the company, and 'tis always best to be no way remarkable.—As to the sort of person whose partiality you should encourage, that must be left in some measure to your own taste, provided there be as little of that as possible; for our choice should depend more on judgment than fancy. The person of your lover signifies nothing at all; provided you make his mind your aim, you will pay little regard to his outward form: his temper, his modesty, his goodnature, his good principles, will be your chief consideration. As to his being of an open or reserved, retired or sociable disposition, it is this part must depend on your own taste; and perhaps, if you meet with all the other good qualities, ~~you~~ you would not care which of these is added to them, though, if you are of my way of thinking, an open temper would be most pleasing to you.—As to the rank of your lover, provided he be a gentleman, it matters not whether he be noble or simple: a private gentleman with a good heart, is far preferable to a coronet with a bad one; at the same time that I would not recommend a general conclusion that title and wickedness is the same thing: but the appellation of *gentleman* I take to comprehend all those noble, open, generous sentiments, that equally adorn the public or private station.—As to fortune, that too I would have you think a matter of indifference, provided there

there is a sufficiency. A gentleman in distress I look upon as a most melancholy object: I would, therefore, strongly advise you against running into that error, of thinking that a great deal of love will do with a very little money. I assure you, I believe it doubles and trebles the distress; for how much the more we love, so much the more we grieve for the distress of the objects, and the little fruits of united affection are a daily anxiety upon our minds; and it is a constant struggle, whether to make them work for their living, or keep them poor in order to preserve their rank. This, I reckon, is generally the case of those who have sufficient to keep up a handsome appearance as single men, but soon feel the disagreeable pinching necessities of a family. Above these strait circumstances, the happiness is equal from the least to the greatest income, only that the more we have, the more others may too; that is, if it is in our power to give. But a woman is sometimes, and indeed often, mistaken, in thinking that her husband's fortune is her own; she has generally little to do with the spending of any part of it, but just what is allotted to her own private expences, or those of the household, in which I need not to you, I am sure, recommend the most exact care and frugality that is consistent with plenty and sufficiency. Thus, my dear niece, you have my
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free thoughts on this subject, in most of which, I dare say, you are before hand with me; and wherever you differ, I desire you will freely tell me so. I shall expect your answer, and, I am sure, read it with great pleasure. I sincerely wish that part of my caution may not be necessary for you; but that you will one day meet with a gentleman, who possesses too great a sense of his great duty to his Maker to deceive you, but who, sensible of the happiness he will possess by such a union, offers his hand and heart together. This, dear Harriot, is the earnest wish of

Your affectionate Aunt."

ESSAY

E S S A Y XXVIII.

HOW happy, did we but consider it, is man, to have revealed unto him all that is necessary to make him approved of by Him on whom alone his happiness depends ! It must appear consistent with reason, that is, consistent with our ideas of a God who has made us, that we cannot be happy or miserable but as he pleases ; and that he will certainly make us either the one or the other, according as we please or displease him. In order, therefore, to give us the means of happiness, that is, a knowledge of what he approves and disapproves, he has first implanted in our breast certain ideas of right and wrong ; but as that is not now sufficient, it being evident that we are imperfect creatures, he has revealed to us the things by which we may obtain his favour, and induce him to make us happy, and the things that will displease him, and draw down upon us his displeasure, and, in consequence, our punishment : but as our imperfection, and of course our liability to error, must continue while we are in this state, it has pleased our Creator further to reveal to us, that we shall not be finally judged, acquitted, or condemned,

condemned, till after our state here is closed ; that then our whole account will be made up ; and that, accordingly as we have acted in respect to the rules he has laid down, we shall then be dealt with. And is not this manner of acting agreeable to the ideas we form of justice ?

It will be asked, no doubt, Why all the world is not equally dealt with, and this knowledge made known to every person ? I beg leave to resolve all such questions of why and wherefore into the certainty that a perfect Being must do right. His reasons must be far above out of our sight ; and if the actions of a man, whom we account wise in his generation, are by those around him supposed right, though a little out of our power to guess at his reasons for some particular actions in his life,—I say, if a man can attain this confidence from his fellow-creatures, surely, an infinitely perfect Being (who by his being so is above our comprehension) ought to stand in our sight as incapable of error ; and, though his ways are to us unsearchable, and his reasons past finding out, yet we may be certain that it is impossible but that all is according to perfect justice, and perfect mercy, and perfect wisdom : and when, by our following that light we have given to us, and acting according to our knowledge, we have approved ourselves in the sight of
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the Almighty, then perhaps he may admit us into the secret reasons of his will, and the opening the treasures of wisdom and knowledge be one great source of that happiness which our Creator will bestow on the virtuous and obedient. And thus, as it was said on another occasion, behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than to offer the fat of lambs. To obey the will of God will yield us more pleasure than to scrutinize his government; and we shall be in a fairer road to happiness by searching for our own duty, than in wandering after delusive mazes of scepticism and doubts. To us to whom it has pleased the Creator, at this present, to give the knowledge of his will, nothing can be plainer, nor more consistent with our own frame both of body and mind, than the commands and injunctions which he has wrote down. Every precept tends to our happiness even here; and every thing that is forbidden, guards us against those actions that would tend to make us unhappy. Does not justice, uprightness, integrity, affability, and mercy, tend to make us honoured, respected, and beloved; and are not these instruments of happiness? And does not fraud oppression, insincerity, and unkindness, tend to make us feared, avoided, and detested; and must not any one be wide of happiness, who has not the love of his fellow-creatures? Does not so-

briety, chastity, and moderation, tend to the satisfaction of a man's own mind, and the confidence of his fellow-creatures? And does not inebriety, licentiousness, and extravagance, tend to inquietude of mind and body, and to break the ties of friendship, and render a man mistrusted and avoided? Can light and darkness be more opposite than an upright, steady, amiable disposition, and a selfish, wavering, and light one? The one shews us man as he ought to be; the other shews the man reversed, descending from his natural state, and gradually falling into that of a being inferior to himself. The one raises him, by degrees, to his primeval state, and in the end, constitutes him an angel; the other sinks him, by rapid strides, into that state which the devils wish him to be in, and in the end he becomes one of themselves.

If to the practice of every virtue which is commanded, we add a constant idea that we are under His eye who has commanded and approves our virtues; if to this we again add that delightful sensation of love and adoration towards that Being who has vouchsafed thus to instruct us in order to make us happy; and if, once more, to this we add a remembrance of our future account to Him, and that we then shall stand or fall by our own actions here; we join all that can make us happy, easy, and contented.—To be able to look up with confidence

confidence to a perfect Being, and hope for his favour, must surely constitute our felicity, and render the mind constantly even, chearful, and serene, with regard to itself; easy and benevolent towards others; and joyful in the idea that the God who made us approves and loves us.

E S S A Y XXIX.

THE concern attending on bad actions makes it surprising, that man, who naturally flies whatever gives him pain, should so frequently be himself the cause of his own sufferings, and, by repeating actions which he disapproves, give himself continual cause for self-reproach, which is the keenest of all reproach: but it is this very frequency and these repetitions of folly, that in time cause the reproach which at first attends it to wear off, or at least to pass over the mind so quick, and so lightly, that it is scarce perceptible, or forgot as soon as thought; like clouds in a windy day, whose shadows pass off with such swiftness, the momentary eclipse is scarce perceived. Thus, from carelessness, with regard to small actions done amiss, we

pass on to disregard those of greater moment, and become at last insensible to the most constant course of the most flagrant wickedness. So much to be lamented is it, that in our youth we meet with none to encourage our own natural feelings, but that every companion helps the devil to bring on his evil work, by calming the sorrows of self-reproach, which, if kept up to their natural standard, would prove the sure means of preventing any sort of wrong behaviour either to God, our neighbour, or ourselves. But as this blessing is scarce to be expected in this degenerate age, there is another which I wonder has not more influence on our conduct; and that is the satisfaction, I might say joy, of the mind after the performance of a good action: nay, I might say, no good *thought* loses its reward; we feel ourselves mounting in our own opinions even while we *think* well, and we receive pleasure even from a wish to do something that is good; but, if we actually perform it, the pleasure lasts long after the action is over, comes across us in our sorrows, comforts and cheers us: be it ever so small, we thank ourselves for the deed. So great, so exceeding great, is the mercy of our God, that we enjoy the fruit even while we sow the seed; it springs up as we go along, and blesses the mind with joy while the hand is doing the deed. But if we have performed

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a good action, in opposition to a struggle to do a bad one, the joy is doubled; we congratulate ourselves on the escape from painful sensations, and on the satisfaction we have given our mind. The pleasure also arising from doing a right action continues much longer than the pain arising from a bad one; and this is, I fear, owing to the one being less frequent than the other: but be the reason of it what it may, it is certainly a great inducement to do as many good actions as we can, and to think as many right thoughts; for if we can frequently give ourselves satisfaction, why not do it? It is certainly in our power to do much more good than we do; and as every the least good, as I have observed, brings its reward with it, it is a matter of the greatest astonishment, that rational creatures should deprive themselves of what is in their power; or, to speak plain, that we are not all much better than we are. We deprive ourselves of the most *agreeable sensation* in the world, *our own applause*, as well as of the highest honour, the applause of God.—I would by no means be understood to provoke spiritual pride, of all pride the most unbecoming; but I would have nature have its own feelings, and let the pleasure the mind feels on one good action be its incitement to another, and the disgrace it feels on a bad action deter it from a second. “ God

“ created man upright, but he has found out many
 “ inventions,” says the Wise Man. One of his
 inventions is, to prevent and shift the voice of
 nature, which leads us by the most agreeable me-
 thods to virtue, and deters us by the most natural
 check from vice. Pleasure of the purest nature
 follows, and consequently promotes every virtuous
 action; and pain of the most disagreeable sort
 succeeds, and consequently deters us from every
 wicked one. Peace of mind follows on the resist-
 ance of temptation; and pain of mind, on the
 omission of a good deed in our power: so suscep-
 tible is the mind of right and wrong; so much is
 done for us to help us to restore the purity of our
 nature, and bring it again to that state when sin
 was far away, and perfection was the nature of
 man. We absolutely resist nature, not follow it,
 when we act contrary to right reason; for what is
 right reason, but the voice of nature crying to
 man, to preserve her in her natural state, and not
 degrade her by yielding to false impulses to things
 subversive of her dignity, contradictory to the ten-
 dency of our frame, which shrinks at evil, and
 leans forward to good? And what so great an evil
 as the reproaching ourselves for being the cause of
 our own misfortunes? What so great a good as
 the consciousness of having promoted our own
 happiness? What misfortune so great as disgracing

our

our nature, what happiness so great as the improving it? And, to add to the folly of the one and the wisdom of the other, eternal happiness succeeds conscious pleasure here, and eternal misery conscious guilt.

It is great pity, I think, when any person, from a good intent, heightens the difficulties of virtue, and makes religion seem a hard and dangerous service. It is no doubt an anxious one. What can call for our attention so much, as an eternity of happiness? What can deserve so diligent a conduct as the prospect of heavenly joys? But as the end is worthy all our care, so is the way to it worthy of our attention, even if we had no hopes beyond this life; for there is no one rule laid down in the Gospel, which does not immediately tend to some good with regard to this life. Does not *justice*, *mercy*, and *uprightness*, make a man *trusted*, *beloved*, and *befriended*; and will not *confidence*, *affection*, and *friendship*, make any man succeed in his affairs? Will not *injustice*, *cruelty*, and *cunning*, make a man *shunned*, *feared*, and *despised*; and can such a man thrive? If he does, it is not because he is a bad man, but because the world don't know it. Common customers or acquaintance don't enquire into the characters of those they deal with, or they would not chuse the good man's neighbour. Though the way be narrow,

it is straight; it turns not to the right hand nor to the left, but goes on in one uniform line of doing good and receiving good, and bearing the ills of this life with steadiness and resignation, till death opens a wider field of action, and we commence aërial spirits, free to roam in regions of bliss, and growing in perfection to higher degrees of happiness. And is this the thorny road which some good men tell us is the way to Heaven? The borders, indeed, of vice grow up with thorns and briars to the edge of the path of virtue; but those who attempt not its bounds, feel not their pricks. The good have their sorrows indeed, but they proceed not from themselves, nor are they owing to the path they walk in. The prospect at the end of their road supports them to bear the common, or even the uncommon, ills of life; a support which the bad man knows nothing of. On the whole, the wise man, who conducts himself according to the consequences of things, will sum up the whole matter as his predecessor did many years ago, that *all is either vanity or vexation of spirit, but the fear of God, and the keeping to his commands.*

E S S A Y XXX.

IT is not perhaps more difficult to find, than to be, a true Friend. This may seem a strange assertion ; but I think, the truth of it will appear, if we consider that few persons like to receive true friendship in the instances in which it is most strongly shewn. A profession of friendship alone, and even some proofs of it, do not make a perfect friend : to be that, we must hesitate at nothing that can serve the persons we mean to be a friend to. We must give them our sincere opinion of their conduct, if we see it going wrong ; and (though in the most delicate manner, yet) we must not fail to stop them in the progress of their most eager pursuit, if that pursuit would tend to their prejudice. But where, I would ask, is the man that would see these acts in a right point of view ? It is no small difficulty, then, to make a man receive true friendship : he will set down such marks of it to the account of envy, spleen, or, at least, of officiousness ; and, instead of considering how many anxious hours it has cost his friend before he could persuade himself to offer his advice,

vice, he turns him off as a meddler, that has, without caring for his friendship, run himself into the sure way of losing it. How few are there that would stop to consider whether friendship was the real motive of the caution he received, and, if it was, to return it by the gratitude which such actions deserve! and, even, if the advice is neglected, the friend that gave it ought not to be so.

I do not think it necessary to tell your friend all the faults you see in him, but it certainly is one strong proof of friendship to endeavour to lead a man to correct himself. We are all, alas! so prone to think well of ourselves, that we do not give ourselves leave to think we can be mended; so that, if we were to be told of some fault or failing, or wrong conduct in any one particular, we should resent it as an injury, and not benefit by the information. A true friend is, undoubtedly, a happiness not easily found; but it is difficult, surely, also to *be* one, considering the various tempers and passions of mankind; and I believe we must content ourselves with doing good to our friends in a general way, as it scarcely will ever be in our power to be a friend in the full extent of the word. I believe we must content ourselves, also, with doing all the good we can to others, and not expect any very great marks of friendship

friendship ourselves. If we are in general well received and respected, it is as much as the generality of us have reason to expect; and by not expecting too much, we save ourselves from many disappointments. Even from those for whom we feel an affection and a particular regard we must not look for an adequate return: we must consider, that, though they suit us, we may not suit them; they may know some more agreeable to their own disposition, whom they love much better than us. In short, the true active friendship is so rare we shall not often meet with it; but a person may be a friend without shewing every instance of friendship: we should receive all that offers with gratitude and pleasure, and, as far as lies in our power, be a friend ourselves to others.

ESSAY

E S S A Y XXXI.

THERE is no one, I should suppose, that has passed through life without receiving injuries. Some have been more happy in that respect than others, but, in some instance or other, we must all, more or less, have been subject to them. The irritation consequent on a first injury, I dare say, we all must remember. By a further acquaintance with the world, we shall find all have had their offences, and that in some degree the world is a scene of perpetual war. If we observe all the little as well as the great squabbles of mankind, we shall be convinced this is too true. Real injuries there are too many, but those which pride, passion, and prejudice, see and resent, are innumerable.

Our religion, indeed, has, happily for us, provided the best way of blunting the edge of real injuries ; and in some cases nothing but that can stifle the rising resentment : but, as soon as that command of forgiving our enemies has sunk the passions to rest, there are means of continuing the calm into which they are hushed, by secondary methods.

methods. We should, in the first place, think of the injury as little as we can; we should, next, cast the offenders also as much as possible from our thoughts, and, when we do think of them, place them in the relation they stand in to others, and not to ourselves, and reflect, that, though they have injured us, there are those to whom they are dear, and therefore the publishing or resenting the faults of a few will be destroying the peace of many. Perhaps the injustice done us is unknown to those connected with them, who would be deeply afflicted if they found them capable of acting in that manner. By nobly stifling then our anger, and concealing the injustice done us, we save the hearts of many worthy persons from sorrow. If the injury is too open to be concealed, still our taking little notice of it lets things go quietly on; and what might by our resentment be blown up to a storm, sinks by our behaviour into a calm. In time the injured person can look upon the injurer with calmness and even compassion; and regret that prejudice, passion, or pride, had been so blended with good sense and good nature as to permit them to be guilty of such injustice.

There is no one precept of our religion more calculated to give us comfort and happiness than that of forgiving offences, even while they are committing, and passing by injuries, even while

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we feel them. This is so far from littleness of mind (considering it exclusively from our duty), that none but the most magnanimous can practise it. That person must take things in the great, that can overlook injuries even while he feels them, as the common lot of humanity ; that they arise from the infirmities of it, and that all are not alike capable of governing their passions. Little minds fly out on every the least injury, indeed see many that are not, rail in every company against their foe, tell their tale to every body, and think it becoming them to shew they think themselves offended, blow the flame by resisting it, and ruffle themselves into doing as they have been done by, and making themselves by this means equally culpable : whereas a calm, dignified mind, feels with poignancy all the shafts of envy or malice, but takes it out by gentle methods from his heart, turns from the person who threw it, and lives to those who give him a better reception ; and, if he cannot, by this peaceable behaviour, melt the injurer down to regret his past unkindness, he at least has gained a greater conquest, the conquest of himself.

E S S A Y XXXII.

IT is a sad thing that we are all apt to think trifles in our manner and behaviour either of too much or too little consequence. The mind is seldom in a perfect bias, neither inclining too much to the serious or the trifling. Perfection, indeed, must not and ought not to be looked for in human kind; but still, if it had all the advantages it might have, it would be much nearer it than we are apt to imagine it can possibly arrive at. The case is, the mind is usually bent one way, and no care taken to cultivate all its powers, and to expand it so as to turn to every point.—Let all things come in their proper order, and be set down in our estimate of things according to the rules of reason. Let small actions be accounted small, though we should perform them with propriety. Let great actions, or, to speak more properly, actions of importance, be performed with that seriousness and attention which they deserve.

There is nothing in which the world is more inclined to lead us wrong than in reversing the
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reality of things. Young people, just come out, as the phrase is, into the world, are led to think that dress, manner, dancing, &c. are things of the utmost importance, and thus their more sober studies are now become of little or none. By degrees they acquire a taste for these little embellishments of life, and cast away the more refined and lasting ones. Time creeps on, and the trifles are quite unbecoming to them, which they laid so much stress upon, before they are aware of it; and they don't know how to regain the long neglected *solids* of life. I will allow to youth that it may be excused a little frivolity; but I would wish it to know what is frivolous, and to know it so as to leave it with a good grace at any time when called upon to do so, especially when called upon by the advance of years to think of weightier concerns. I will also allow that dress is even of importance, in respect to that propriety which ought ever to attend it. There is a dress suited to all ages, ranks, circumstances, and situations; and to be dressed so as to appear sensible that we know to what class we belong, is a part of that adherence to reason which becomes us as reasonable creatures. Perhaps I may seem to treat a matter I call a trifle as a thing of importance myself: but I wish to be understood, that I think of its consequence, that we, in every respect, the least

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as well as the greatest, act in a manner that shews we know what we are ; at the same time that, from the same principle of reason, I would wish every one to treat trifles as such with regard to the time allotted and the attention paid to them. Carelessness and inattention in dress and manners is not necessary to shew we think great things of importance : the good œconomist of time will always find enough to be well and decently dressed, and the elegant and fashionable habit will not be more regarded by the sensible part of the world, The time employed on dress in the present age, without I hope being too severe, may be looked upon as one of its greatest faults : it is in itself a useless and unnecessary way of spending so large a portion of time, but the consequences of it are really serious ; the thoughts must be employed on what we are about, and the preparations for the toilet are as long as the toilet itself. This consumes our time, and leaves a very small portion for better employments ; and, indeed, the purposes for which all these pains are taken usually swallow up the remainder of the day. Though wherever this attention to dress prevails, that rank must be in the end unhappy, yet it would be less to be lamented, if it was confined to those who figure in the high regions of the *ton*, and was not to be found elsewhere ; but, alas ! all ranks are infected

with the disease, and the time of every person in every situation is employed in too large a proportion on this trifling article : we see no distinction of rank or fortune ; and I fear this is an indication, not of our present riches, but of our future poverty.

E S S A Y XXXIII.

THERE is nothing more pleasing than a modest, sedate, and quiet manner in conversation, and yet how very few do we see that take any pains to attain it ! An overbearing, dictatorial, positive manner, is more disgusting than the persons who habituate themselves to talk in that manner are aware of. They fancy their opinion will be enforced by a peremptory manner of delivering it, and are not sensible that their arguments are almost forgot by the remarks that are made upon the manner of supporting them. If it is natural to a person to have a lively, chearful manner, *that* is certainly not to be wished otherwise ; it is agreeable in itself, and has an agreeable effect on the company present, and it will

will not be found to become ever disliked, as those persons very seldom are overbearing in their opinion; they are too lively to stick closely and gravely to one subject, and had rather give up their opinion than grow warm about it. But what I would remark upon is that loud, dictatorial manner which some assume: it stops all general conversation (which is the thing to be wished in a mixed company), and fixes all to one point, as those loud talkers generally expect hearers, and indeed *must* have them. Be their opinion never so right, or their arguments never so just, the sitters-by must wish the subject dropped, that they may have room to talk too.—Precise language is also, in my opinion, very disagreeable; the hearers are thrown at a distance, and feel unequal to the conversing with one so well versed in all the proper forms of speech. A propriety of expression and good language is both agreeable and a necessary accomplishment to people in high life, but the use of it should seem to flow naturally, and not to be the result of taking great pains at the instant. Good-nature too will dictate, that, if we meet with any person not quite conversant in all the parts of speech, we should attend to the matter, and not regard the manner. This, we ought, indeed, to observe in reading as well as hearing, and not miss the benefit of good sense, and

the means of knowledge, because it comes dressed in russet cloathing.—Perhaps my reader may think I glance at myself: if I did, I trust I shall be forgiven for making this indirect apology for that loose and unrestrained manner in my writings, language, and subjects, which I am sensible is ill adapted to the correct and refined taste of the present age. I did not, however, think of myself when I began this remark; but confess it occurred to me as I wrote it, well knowing how much my pen merits the lash of criticism.

ESSAY XXXIV.

On the Benefits of the Love of Literature.

BESIDES the pleasure which Knowledge brings to the mind while it is attaining, there are other reasons which should induce us to allot as great a portion of our time as we can allow of in our youth to reading and learning. If we live to old-age, the chief source of delight must be the knowledge attained in our youth; and, in the midst of sickness or trouble, what resource
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has the mind but from those auxiliaries reading and recollection? But if books are strangers to us in youth, they will not be welcomed in old-age. When years creep on, and debar us of pleasures attained by activity, what can we substitute in their room? We want some amusement, and, if we cannot give it to ourselves, we must scarce expect it from others; but if, in the days of youth and vigour, a man has laid in a store of knowledge and a taste for reading, he has provided against that lassitude which is the attendant of age: his confinement seems light, when he opens a favourite author; nay, even if he is deprived of the use of his limbs, he can for a while forget his calamity in some interesting book. It may be asked, why persons must read in their youth to be amused with reading in old-age? The best answer to this is experience: the slightest observation will prove the truth of my assertion, that a taste for literature is not to be attained in old-age. By literature I would not be understood to mean deep study, but in general a delight in reading. Those who have employed their youth in a frivolous manner, will meet an insipid and tiresome old-age: those who have had a well-furnished mind, and have been accustomed to employ themselves, will be able to sustain their growing infirmities with patience and decency; will be willing to enjoy the

conversation, and be thankful for the attention, of their friends, but will not rest solely on them for amusement : when they are alone, they can furnish out many an hour in their library, and be lost in the pleasures of their youth ; take up a long-neglected author, and greet it like an old acquaintance and schoolfellow, and, while the subject attracts the mind, the imagination will wander back to incidents that occurred in real life at the time of their first reading it. Nor is this attainment more necessary for men than it is for women : the girl, and the young woman, who have spent their time in a thousand frivolous employments, perhaps just suited to the present moment (but even then unworthy of much regard), find age advance with churlish brow, and they become disturbed and angry because nature will not allow of the amusement of youth in old-age. They fly to the same diversions, but those afford them not the same amusement, or, if they do, it is so much the worse : the world is sick of them, if they are not so of the world ; and at length a time must come, when home must be their place of residence. Here, without resource in themselves, they send to others to help them still to trifle away their life, too much already trifled away : they grow fretful and miserable, and are without comfort and without society : there is a vacancy
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in the mind which cannot now be filled up—no employment can give entire satisfaction that does not arise from a person's own choice. But to those whose mind has been accustomed to reflect and to employ itself, to those whose time has been carefully divided between the necessary and the agreeable occupations of life, to them old-age advances in smiles: smooth and even is his brow; he salutes them with composure, and they greet him as a long-expected visitor; they bear his shakes with fortitude, and fly for relief from his necessary severities, to the storehouse of pleasure, their books.

It is one of those common and wise sayings which we pay too little attention to, that Custom is second Nature; it is most undoubtedly true, that habits in time are so interwoven with our nature that we can scarce separate them. Of how great consequence to us is it, then, that we give ourselves those habits that will be always useful and pleasing to us, and which we shall never wish to break through. We should endeavour to habituate ourselves to exactitude in business, to the love of books, to amuse and employ ourselves without the help of others; that, as age advances, business may not be a burthen nor books dry food, nor amusements be necessarily brought us by others.

Accustom children, even in the tenderest age, to be satisfied without being continually attended to ; encourage a contented, quiet enjoyment of its own little playthings and books ; and in youth give a habit of employment, and a love of self-amusement. This will prove of the greatest advantage as we advance in years, even before old-age creeps on ; for the cares of the world never sit heavier than at the period called middle-age. The fire of youth, of careless youth, is over ; and the pains and aches which make a man attend most to himself are not yet come : he will want something to draw aside his mind from too great solicitude about the affairs of life : he does not much care for the diversions of youth, nor to depend wholly on others for amusement. If he has not been so happy as to cultivate a taste for literature in his youth, he finds no relish, no desire for it now : he gets sour from want of the refinement of the mind ; grows suspicious from want of that liberality that always attends on an enlarged understanding ; and his heart contracts, instead of expanding, as he advances in years.

In all seasons, in all situations, in all scenes of life, the great benefits of the love of knowledge are almost impossible to be enumerated. I have dwelt the longer on this, because I do not
recollect

recollect its having been enlarged upon before: though, no doubt, it is an observation that must have occurred to every enquiring mind, from the visible difference between a person accustomed to reflection and one who is surprised by every fresh circumstance in his life;—between one who, in all events, can turn into his closet and be composed and amused, and one who never found any resource there, but is alive to every untoward event, and unable to blunt the edge of disappointment;—between the disposition of a learned, and that of an unlearned old-age.

E S S A Y XXXV.

IT may seem a strange expression, but I would recommend to all, if possible, but to young persons without exception, a habit of acting right. Perhaps this expression will appear less strange, if we consider how often young persons, and those indeed of all ages, get into a habit of acting wrong. To explain what I mean more clearly:

clearly :—By first acting amiss for want of consideration, we go on to act amiss, till custom makes it so familiar, that we cannot, without great difficulty, alter our course. Carelessness throws us into a wrong line ; indolence keeps us there, till habit establishes what originated from choice ; and we become criminal without being naturally vicious ; or, to speak less harshly, we become the children of folly without being heirs to it. A person, who, either by a proper education, or by some fortunate chance, sets out right in the world, seldom deviates into a wrong way ; he is sensible that he is where he ought to be, and will not stoop to the meanness of vice : he finds his inferiors respect and love him, and all ranks commend and caress him ; and he is induced to go on till he reaps his reward in the inward peace and approbation of his own heart. When the Wise Man said, *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*, he did not mean only instruct him right, but lead him up to man in a right and proper way ; accustom him to act with integrity, probity, and diligence ; then, when he must be left to himself, he will not be blown about with every blast, nor subject to the call of every passion, nor to the desires of every companion, but he will stand firm to his principles, and turn not aside to the right hand nor

to the left, but walk on in the way that had been made pleasant to him by custom, and that he had been confirmed in by reflection.

Custom, indeed, will be found to bring every thing easy to us; and if we are thoroughly convinced, that such and such modes of acting would be right for us, let us but force ourselves to adhere to them for a time, and they will grow pleasant, and even seem necessary to our happiness. Let young persons but steadily pursue a conduct which they know to be right, and which they are sensible will give pleasure to their friends; or let their friends, if too young to guide themselves, but keep them in the right way, and give them a habit of acting, speaking, and thinking with propriety and with reason; and it will grow familiar and pleasant to them for the remainder of their lives: they will avoid much of that struggle between vice and virtue, which is ever the case when they have been led to neither. They may have been instructed in, and may know, what is right and fit, and been told the difference between vice and virtue, but, unless they have been led to pass by the thorns of vice, and to turn to the way of virtue, when both ways lie before them, they will hesitate to which to direct their course; and if some companion happen to appear as the champion of vice, they are led to take that side, and to go

on without any particular inclination to be wicked, till they see and feel their folly.

A habit of reflection is another article greatly to be wished in young people. It is a great happiness, and replete with many advantages. Whether we attain this by education, incident, or constitution, it is a turn of mind much to be coveted. In education it is too much neglected: children are taught lessons of virtue by rote, and acquire a great deal of useful knowledge; but that knowledge, which of all others is the most beneficial, is not always given so liberally as could be wished,—I mean the knowledge of ourselves and others. I do not wish to be understood, that I think a judgment upon the persons or manners of people a necessary art:—far from it; but I would give the mind a reflective turn, though not a censorious one; and, above all, would lead it to be ever reflecting on itself. It is certain that a mind that scrutinises events will generally go back to causes; and, as most evils proceed from vice, it will be almost impossible not to detest and desire to avoid the cause that has produced such sad effects. I do not believe that any person of a reflective cast ever did a deliberate wrong action. People may be hurried by passions, or led by companions, to do amiss; but they will be guarded against a wrong action, if left to themselves: and the cause of this

is clearly from the purity that there is in the mind of man, which, when from this habit of reflection it is given scope to, will operate on the side of virtue; for certain it is, that no one ever made a wrong reflection, or concluded a calm reasoning, with a resolution to do amiss. We should accustom ourselves to form a judgment, not on men, but on things; and we shall find both pleasure and profit by doing so.

I knew a young man, who, by an incident in his family, was given an education which led him to a speculative turn of mind. He scrutinised every event, and read men and manners with a curious eye, though with a benevolent heart. Unfortunate in having strong passions, he fell into vice when he was let loose in the world; but he as often returned from it with abhorrence. Nature and reason were at variance for some time; but thought pressed hard upon him, and the judgment he had formed on such and such actions before he entered on the stage of life, occurred to him, and reproached him, till folly appeared to him once more in all her native ugliness. He turned from her at length disgusted and chagrined; he gained an entire mastery over his passions; and is now settled down into one of the most agreeable as well as amiable of young men. He gave me this account of the war he had waged with himself;

self; and assured me, that, with his strong passions, had it not been for that reflective turn of mind which he had acquired in his early youth, he could not have answered for the consequences; but by turning inward on himself, whenever he had disgraced his principles, and feeling himself unworthy of regard, he so heartily despised himself for having fallen into the vices he had ever held in abhorrence, that he gained at last the mastery over himself, and with gratitude looked back to that happy event which led him to reason and reflect.

Some time ago I insisted on the necessity of a love of books and knowledge towards making a happy old-age; I beg leave now to mention, that it is laying up in store for ourselves much comfort to have the mind employed, but that it is also doing so to habituate the body to activity. By this I do not mean violent exercise, which always terminates in extreme laziness; but that sort of general activity, which gives a free circulation to the blood, assists the animal spirits, and in the end proves the source of cheerfulness and a healthy old-age. In order to illustrate this assertion, I shall take leave to give an account of a visit I lately made to a friend of mine in the country. I rode down to his house about an hour before dinner, and found him very busy planting some flowers in
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his garden. I asked him what was become of his gardener? He told me he was busy sowing turnips. He continued planting his flowers till within a few minutes of dinner, when he retired to dress, and returned nicely and elegantly clean to sit down with us to table. It being too hot to walk immediately after dinner, he proposed a game of billiards; after which he took me to a long room, where all his children were busily employed: the tasks of the day were over, but they were each busy in some way or other. After viewing this engaging sight, we took a long walk, and returned to the usual amusements till supper. The next day it rained, and the flower-garden was not to be attended. I dreaded a long, insipid morning; but my friend led me into a room which was full of mechanical and useful implements:—he had been trying, he told me, above a week, to make a particular sort of table. In the name of wonder, says I, why don't you send for your carpenter? If I did, says he, I should have nothing to do, after my family occupations are over:—this keeps my mind employed, and my body in health. He then shewed me all the things he had made with his own hands, and some in which his children had helped him. His books and drawings of every kind of thing lay on the table; and I was so delighted to have something to do, and so anima-
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ted by seeing him go so heartily to work, that, in the space of four rainy days during my stay, I made myself a very nice and useful writing-box. Sometimes he tried experiments in chemistry; sometimes amused himself with natural philosophy: in short, throughout all the hours of the day, not one was idle, nor one quite unusefully employed. He is drawing towards his grand climacteric, but has the appearance, cheerfulness, and activity of forty. He carried me to see a neighbour of his, who is his direct contrast. We found him with his great coat on, sauntering up and down his gravel walk: he asked us to go in, where we found his wife, with two or three great dirty boys rolling on the floor. I asked him if he had been riding? He said Yes, he had been to fetch the newspaper from the next village, which he had read twice over, but could find no news. We soon took our leave, though he entreated us to stay till his dinner came; for that he should not give himself the trouble to make a dressing, as he expected nobody. My friend told me in our gallop home, that, as soon as dinner is over, he goes to sleep, and is waked for supper, or perhaps for a game of whist, if the squire drops in. His looks rather outstrip his age, and he is testy and unsatisfied with all the world.—I do not intend to insist that all should be carpenters or gardeners; but I think it is consonant

sonant to reason, and will be abetted by experience, that a general activity of mind and body gives a chearfulness to the one and a strength to the other, which cannot be procured by any other means. By activity of body, I do not wish to be understood to mean that hurry and bustling manner which some have, and which gives a flurry instead of chearfulness to the spirits, and takes off from that steadiness which is the result of the employments I am speaking of: an employment that amuses, and an amusement that employs the mind and the body, is useful to ourselves, and makes us agreeable to others. The lassitude in the very manner of an idle man is really disgusting: he yawns out his existence, and grumbles away his time, a distress to himself and to all about him; he has a thousand real aches and pains, and a thousand imaginary ones: whereas the active man, even if he feels pain, bears it well, having accustomed himself to endure inconveniences; and when all his powers are really curbed by age, like an old soldier, he can recount his actions, and tell of arts and sciences to his friends and family, which he learnt in his youth, and put in practice when he advanced in years,

E S S A Y XXXVI.

*On the Happiness of right Ideas of Ourselves and
our Capacities.*

THE faculties of the mind are capable of contributing so much to our happiness, that we ought to take the utmost care to improve them, and to store them with those things that may hereafter yield us comfort, when the powers of activity are over. The memory is one of those faculties, which of all others affords us the most ample share of amusement: our retentive power is a blessing not to be slighted; but, as it is with many others, it is too often abused; instead of locking up in our storehouse such things as will yield us pleasure in years to come, we fill our present time with trifles that are not worth remembering, or at least the recollection of them can give no sort of pleasure, but oftentimes pain. If we were wise, we should look on all the faculties that we have as helps to make us comfortable in our passage through life, and those we have not as preventatives of sorrow. Not to have it in
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Our power to look into futurity, is on many accounts a great blessing: how many hours of sorrow does it avert, and how many days of pleasure does it afford us? Life in general is sowed so much more thick with thorns than roses, that, were we to see before us that we were soon to feel the former, we could hardly take pleasure in the fragrance of the latter. In the midst of enjoying our friends and family, could our mind open and see some darling object expiring in another year or another month, how would it damp our comfort, and spoil the present moment! It would take from us the few solid pleasures we enjoy, and cause us double anguish in our pains. In some few instances it might give us comfort to see that there will be an end of a sorrow which we now endure; but even then it would make us too impatient till that time arrived, and every degree of impatience adds a sting to grief. On consideration, then, we see that futurity being hidden from us makes us enjoy and bear the present better. Could we look into it, we should scarce think of any thing else; our present selves would be unregarded in the view; we should be continually taking of our future situations, and anticipate by anxiety either the pains or pleasures we foresaw we should endure and enjoy. The cloud, then, that hangs over our future destiny, is a most mer-

ciful darkness, calculated to make us happy in the present by a becoming behaviour in every situation of life, enjoying the pleasures of it with moderation, knowing they may fly from us, and therefore that it is wise not to rest too much upon them, and bearing our sorrows with patience, hoping that time may remove or lighten them. —The recollection of what is past has many advantages; it helps us to act with more and more wisdom and prudence, if we will but attend to the lessons that it gives. It does, indeed, keep sorrow alive, but still, while it keeps open the wound, it is salutary to the health of the mind; it softens the temper, subdues the passions, and time at length takes from sorrow its poignancy, and leaves only the benefits which were intended by the pain. The recollection of our happy moments, all will allow, is pleasurable, at the same time that their being *past* warns us that those we now enjoy will pass away also, and that therefore we ought to do nothing in them that can take from the pleasure of their recollection hereafter.

I have hitherto only mentioned the retentive faculty of the mind as conducive to happiness, and have enlarged upon it from a persuasion, that, if we regarded our own future comfort as we ought, and considered how much the memory contributes

to it, we should cultivate with more care those other faculties, the exercise of which stores that with future pleasure or pain, according as we use them.

Every talent which we enjoy, if employed to purposes proper and useful, will not only yield a rich harvest in present, but lay into our warehouse such abundance of amusement, that our old-age, instead of rendering us listless and uneasy to ourselves and troublesome to others, will steal upon us unperceived; and when, at length, we must yield, and exertion fails, then memory steps in to our relief, we dwell on years that are past, and see our name unsullied by pride, passion, or prejudice. The young people crowd round the aged head of wisdom, and learn in living characters to be good and great; or, if in too humble a station to be sought, and the life has been too retired to meet applause or blame from others, still does faithful memory yield to one whose faculties had been cultivated and talents not neglected, sweet fruit and solid comfort in the recollection of having done all that was his duty to do. If his situation had not called him out to shine in the field, it will tell him that he had sat under his own vine in innocence and peace. Though not powerful enough to do a great benefit to his neighbours, yet they had shared his assistance as far as his little

store afforded, and had been comforted in their sorrows, and joined with in their joys.

There is no situation of life in which it is not in our power to do some good,—perhaps not deeds of eclat, but such as will be a present comfort to others, and a future one to ourselves. It will ever yield us satisfaction, that we have lent a tear to another's misery, when we shed them for our own; and it will ever add a smile to our joy, that we have felt pleasure in another's. It will take a thorn from our aged couch, to reflect, that, if we have received injuries, we have not returned them; that that peace which we now wish to receive, we have given to others, when it was in our power to give it; and that, when we feel we want compassion, assistance, indulgence, and support and comfort, we do not need a boon we would not give; but that we have been, and given, all these to others, when we needed them not ourselves.

The more I tread the various ways of mankind, the more I ponder their powers, the more I scan their actions, the more I am convinced that 'tis in their power, if they would but think it their wisdom, to be admired, caressed, and imitated. It is to be lamented, that they are regardless of their own happiness, and, as it were, unconscious of those faculties which they possess, and which are capable of making them respected and happy
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at present and in future. But the great misfortune of man lies in the not regarding himself enough as the cause from which must arise great part of his happiness or misery ; he expects it to flow either from eventual causes or from others, and does not consider that neither the one nor the other can contribute any lasting pleasure ; those must arise from his own breast, either from the right management of himself with respect to the events of life, or with respect to others ; and, above all, in particular, from that steady attention to himself which guards him against the innovations of vice and folly, and opens the passage to his heart for every virtue which can make him happy from others, or satisfied from himself.

When we see a person respected and beloved, we don't, perhaps, particularly know what it is that makes him so : it is not owing to any one action, but, in general, to a steady, regular manner of life, a just and upright manner of dealing with his fellow-creatures. His ear is open to their sorrows, his hand is open to their wants. He preserves, through all events of life, a steady and uniform conduct, without pride, without ostentation, without pusillanimity. His conversation is agreeable, and his manners engaging. He is regretted when he leaves his friends, and even his enemies smother their malice in his grave.

E S S A Y XXXVII.

*Men and Events rightly considered tend to make us
more Happy.*

THERE is nothing tends more towards making us happy and contented than attaining to a right estimate of men and things. If we expect to find perfection in the former and happiness from the latter, we shall continually meet with disappointments and mortifications, the only way to prevent which is to open the mind, and stretch it to take in the present state of men and things as they are.

Reflection will convince us, that human nature is subject to a thousand inconveniences, and that we all suffer more or less from the same causes; what is then the lot of all should not be repined at by an individual. A person seldom gives an account of his misfortunes and disappointments singly: as soon as he has told his story, another and another takes up the tale; and, though the circumstances may vary, yet this may tend to convince us, man is not unhappy by himself. It may indeed be matter of sorrow to a
speculative

speculative mind, that man is born to trouble as sure as he is born at all; but it will make one that considers this lament for mankind, but feels less for himself. The common lot of humanity is to struggle with the world and ourselves; and, unless we get the ascendancy over both, we are wretched:—we *must* be so; for the world will give us rubs on rubs, till we become sore and irritated, and our own minds and passions, if unsubdued, will render us unhappy by their agitations and frettings. That we are not to feel real sorrow, is a doctrine fit only for those philosophers who by pride attempted to place human nature in a light very unpleasing, and in a state very unbecoming our weakness and wants; but to make sorrow sit as light as it can, and to confine the occasions of it within a narrow circle, is doing a service to ourselves, and contributes to our passing through life with very tolerable ease.

The difference in our education is one of the causes which we should assign to ourselves for meeting with so great a variety in our acquaintance with the world. Men, especially, ought to share more our pity than raise our choler, when they offend us; for how very, very seldom is it that they are taught that to curb the passions is both their duty and their interest? As soon as they are out of their nursery, and begin their Latin and
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Greek, all thought of any other instruction ceases. A boy's being an apt scholar is all that is thought necessary to make him a great man, and equal with the world; he never hears more of duty, or is curbed in the passions and inclinations which increase with his years: he never is told that he ought to have a command over himself, or that it is necessary, to all the relations of life in which he may hereafter stand, to be of an amiable disposition; if he is so, he is more obliged to nature than to his parents or himself. This, I confess, is an evil; but since it is so, we must, in the course of our life, when we meet with flights, with disappointments, with insults, consider, that they never were informed that to be kind and obliging was a duty they owe to their fellow-creatures; and that to be benevolent and open-hearted is becoming them as men; and that pride, haughtiness, and unkindness, is a token of a mean and little mind. They may gather these principles from books; but they are not usually the concern of the parents to instil. Happy would it be for the world, if the passions were rendered as odious as they are prejudicial; but since every day's experience convinces us that passion and prejudice are the chief guides of man, we must not expect to meet with the smooth and even current in a stream whose foundation is rugged and uneven. The
various

various dispositions of men and women are among the many causes that occasion us disquiet; we should, then, consider that so it is, and that therefore we must not be surprised when we are ill-treated or oppressed. The variety of incidents, also, to which we are subject, should by a wise man be expected and foreseen; and though to expect an evil will not prevent our feeling its pressure, yet it will take off the bitterness of disappointment. It is a maxim which we may perhaps find of use to us, to expect nothing good, and to fear nothing evil: one will guard us from the sting of disappointment, the other will support us when evils actually arrive. In the nature of man it must be so, that we meet with vexations and troubles; but as we think of them, so, in some degree, will they affect us. Real griefs there are in the world; we have need of all our fortitude to bear them with dignity: the best way to do so, is to throw into the scale, as trifles, all the lesser disappointments and troubles of life, believing they arise from the various educations, tempers, and dispositions of men; that all are alike subject to the same effects from the same causes, and that we suffer but the common lot of humanity: and thus an equal and impartial view of men and events will pour into our bitter cup the antidote suited to every ingredient of which it is composed.

ESSAY

E S S A Y XXXVIII,

On acting Plays.

OF all the inventions that have been found out for the laudable purpose of killing time, none bids fairer for effectually answering that great end than that of acting plays. This elegant amusement, so well adapted to the delicacy of the fair sex and the refinement of the other, engrosses the whole of every person's time for a great while before this public exhibition : whoever is destined to be a performer in a play, their attention necessary towards appearing at all on a level with our common players must be so great, that no other occupation can be brought in while preparing for this. Time therefore is most happily whirled away for many months before ; and when the part to be acted is over, the head and heart remain so full of the applause of the audience on the *inimitable performance*, and of the *superexcellent* taste displayed in the dress, that much time is again most happily *killed* for many succeeding weeks.

The advantages accruing from this amusement are almost too numerous for an essay ; they would

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fill a volume, as they indeed will be felt for many generations. The young persons who employ their time in this way, will be so much enamoured with it, that they will infuse the love of it into their descendants, and their name will be remembered as eminent actors and actresses to the third and fourth generation. The elegant turn of mind the acting plays gives to young ladies of fashion cannot be enough admired, and can only be exceeded by that freedom of manners that is introduced by the same method. The dress, too, that is suited to the character to be played, happily takes up a great part of this troublesome commodity time; and the whole is so well calculated to get rid of it, that the encouragers of these gentleman and lady plays, must be applauded by all those who wish to see it destroyed, or who wish well to dissipation, to the decay of good manners, and to the substituting in its place dissoluteness and inelegance. By this method of passing time, the modesty of youth, the steadiness of riper years, and the wisdom of age, are quite extinguished: indeed, there is some reason to hope, that, if properly encouraged, and a theatre erected in the metropolis, some of our first families would nearly equal the performers in Covent-garden and Drury-lane; but till this takes place we must be contented with these private seminaries of learning, so well adapted to the education

tion of youth and the above desirable purposes. I believe there is not a more bewitching employment than that of acting plays, nor any amusement more delightful than that of seeing one; so that, when it once gets possession of the mind by the indulgence of these private exhibitions, it is not easily eradicated: the persons to be performers, and those permitted to see them, seldom think or speak of any thing else for a long course of time. Notwithstanding the advantages which may accrue from this way of life, which are as impossible to be described as they are numerous, I am of opinion, that the soft and sensitive feeling of youth, its innocent chearfulness, its modesty and reserve, has something in it suited to the ideas we have of it; and that it has charms which the most easy assurance can never equal. I spent a week lately with a family whose children were brought up rather in an old-fashioned style: they were pretty numerous, so that all ages were assembled together; and I must own I thought the confusion of the young ladies, and the timidity of the young men, not unbecoming, when in the midst of company older than themselves: when we were alone, they were gay and sprightly; they sung and danced to admiration, but with so little idea of their own merit, that they received the applauses they met with, not as their due, but as owing to the partiality

ality of their friends. They regarded me as the friend of their parents, and therefore paid me every civility in their power, and were not, according to the present more polished manner, laughing and whispering at the old curmudgeon. I left their society with regret, but have promised to join them again, that I may enjoy religion without preciseness, accomplishments without vanity, cheerfulness without noise, beauty without affectation, modesty without reserve, and knowledge without ostentation.

ESSAY XXXIX.

On Building and Improvements.

OF all the follies of the age in which we live, none seems more unaccountable, because none yields so little pleasure, as that of building, altering, and improving, houses and places, beyond our fortune. That a man should wish in some degree to appear equal in taste to his neighbours, and even stretch a little to be more elegant than his father, may perhaps be excusable,
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or, at least, is not matter of much surprise, during the present rage for refinement; but that thousands should be expended which can never be enjoyed, that a whole fortune should be sunk to bring the house and gardens up to the highest pitch of elegance and perfection, and then the owner be under a necessity of living the rest of his life in a foreign country,—this is a degree of folly that is too extraordinary for our belief, did not the fact appear too strongly to be contradicted.

There are few counties that do not prove the truth of the assertion. This age is undoubtedly an age of improvements: it is the universal foible of the great and the little, not to be satisfied with things as they are; every cottage you pass by is improving; the poorest of them all has a bit of new stuck on to it, with a bow window; and the little compact regular parsonage is distorted by the addition of a new eating-room, it being *impossible* to eat in the same room that has served many an able man to eat very good beef and pudding in for years past. The merest hedge ale-house has a sash-window parlour, and it is *fitted up* in taste. If all this can be done without injury to yourselves or your family, by all means, be as elegant and new as you can; but if a child's portion is the cost of the bow-window parlour; if a wife's future maintenance is sunk